PARIS BOUND

NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE

THOMAS J. BATA LIBRARY
TRENT UNIVERSITY

PARIS BOUND

PLAYS BY PHILIP BARRY

THE YOUNGEST
YOU AND I
IN A GARDEN
WHITE WINGS
JOHN
PARIS BOUND
HOLIDAY

PARIS BOUND

A Comedy

BY

PHILIP BARRY

SAMUEL FRENCH
Thos. R. Edwards Managing Director
NEW YORK LOS ANGELES
SAMUEL FRENCH LTD. LONDON
1929

P S3503 .A1313 1929

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

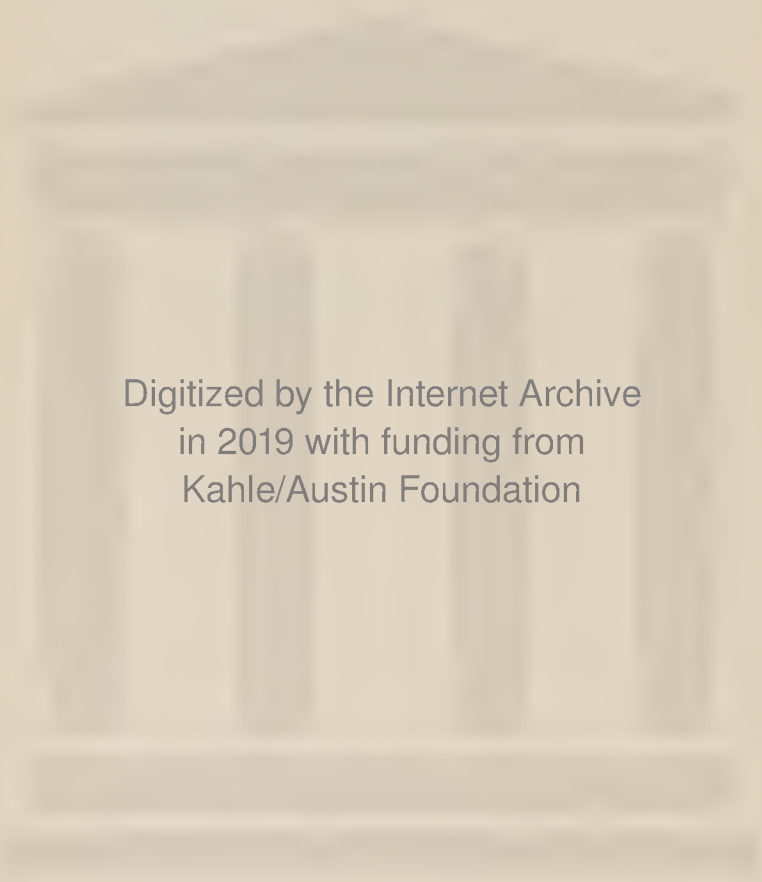
Copyright 1927 and 1929 by Philip Barry

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "PARIS BOUND," being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to a royalty. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, public reading, radio broadcasting, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form this play is dedicated to the reading public only. All inquiries regarding this play should be addressed to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

TO MY MARRIED FRIENDS

218217



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/parisboundcomedy0000barr

"Paris Bound" was first produced by Arthur Hopkins at the Music Box Theatre in New York City on December 27, 1927. It was directed by Arthur Hopkins, the settings were designed by Robert Edmond Jones, and the music for the ballet was composed by Frank Harling.

CHARACTERS

James Hutton
Jim Hutton
Mary Hutton
Helen White
Peter Cope
Nora Cope
Fanny Shippan
Noel Farley
Richard Parish
Julie

Action and Scene

ACT I

The Upstairs Sitting-room of a house in the country near New York. July, six years ago.

ACT II

The Music-room on the top floor of a house in uptown New York, near the East River. May, of this year.

ACT III

The Music-room, six weeks later. July, of this year.

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

Scene: The upstairs sitting-room of a house in the country near New York. July, six years ago.

The sitting-room is a spacious, comfortable room, of no particular period. There is a table and there is a chaise-longue. There are two or three chairs. The entire back wall is bowed into large windows, shaded by awnings from the bright noon-day sun.

Entrance from the hall is at Right.

Entrance into the bedroom is at Left.

At Rise: JULIE, *about 45, a housemaid of a superior type, is listening attentively at the hall doorway. From downstairs, a dance orchestra is heard playing the concluding strains of a tune. The music stops and for a moment there is a dead silence. It is followed by a sudden rush of shouts, cheers, laughter and the sound of two people running upstairs. The orchestra breaks into one triumphal phrase of the wedding-march, and concludes abruptly. Another silence, interrupted by a shout: "She's going to throw it!" Then impatient cries of "Throw it!" "Throw it!" "Why don't you throw it?" Again a silence, briefer this time, then more cheers and laughter.* JULIE *crosses to the bedroom and goes out, closing the door after her. For a moment the room is empty, then, hand-in-hand in the hall doorway, appear* JIM *and* MARY HUTTON. JIM *is twenty-six and* MARY *twenty-two. They have been married two hours. The wedding-breakfast is over, but the guests still remain to*

see them off. MARY *is lovely in her wedding-dress and* JIM *almost handsome in cutaway and white waistcoat. Both are flushed with excitement, and very happy.*

JIM

How long do you think you'll be?

MARY

Twenty minutes. What about you?

JIM

Ten at the outside.

MARY

Good.

JIM

Are your bags ready?

MARY

They will be.

JIM

Peter's to take mine out the back way and stow 'em in the motor. We'll drop yours down through the window.

MARY

That will be nice.

JIM

—Only hurry.

MARY

All right. Will you come back for me here?

JIM

Sure. (*A pause.*) Mary—

MARY

What?

JIM

—Fun.

MARY

I've never enjoyed a wedding so much in my life.

JIM

Me neither.

MARY

And I always enjoy weddings.

JIM

Me too.

[*They gaze at each other for a moment, smiling, fascinated. Finally:*

MARY

Jim—you know something?

JIM

What?

MARY

—I'm a fool about you.

JIM

Dear, you've got nothing on me.

MARY (*a concession*)

—Say fifteen minutes.

JIM

That's better.

MARY

Good-bye, then—

JIM

Good-bye.

MARY

Mind you hurry!

JIM (*from the hallway*)

Mind *you* do!

[MARY *comes into the sitting-room. She calls:*

MARY

Julie! Where are you, Julie?

[*She goes to a table and finds three telegrams on a tray. The bedroom door is opened and* JULIE *comes in.*

JULIE

Yes, Mrs. Hutton?

MARY

—"Mrs—"—?—Don't do that, dear. Not yet. You'll throw me all off.—Still more telegrams?

JULIE

There were a few addressed to you personally. Miss Archer said to keep them here for you.

[MARY *opens and reads a telegram.*

MARY

Oh dear—(*She reads another.*)—Dear, oh dear.—Julie, I could cry.

JULIE

You should be very happy, Miss.

MARY

I am. (*She opens the third telegram.*)—Everyone downstairs seemed to think you made a good job of me.

JULIE

You looked beautiful.

MARY (*reading the telegram*)

Don't I still?

JULIE

Oh, indeed!

MARY (*absently*)

Julie—

JULIE

Yes, Miss?

MARY

This morning Aunt Grace asked me if there was anything in this house I wanted to take with me for my house—and I said you.

JULIE

Ah, that was very kind.

MARY

We'll be back in two months. Would you like to come to me in town, in September?

JULIE

There's no one I'd as soon be with, Miss.

MARY

Then we'll call it settled, shall we? I've got a room

on the top floor there, for my music: I'll want you to keep just it, and my room, and me. Is that all right?

JULIE

Oh yes, Miss. Yes—anything—

[MARY *hesitates a moment, then tears up the telegrams and moves toward the bedroom.*

MARY

I must rush into my things now. Are the bags locked?

JULIE (*following her*)

—All but the small one. I have the checks for the trunks.

MARY

Don't let me forget them. I'm not remembering very well to-day.

[*She goes out into the bedroom.* JULIE *follows her and closes the door after them. A moment, then the hall door is again opened and* NORA COPE *enters. She is a pretty girl of about twenty-three, dressed as a wedding-attendant.*

NORA

Will you come in here, Mrs. White?

[HELEN WHITE *enters from the hall. She is a woman of forty-five, slender and distinguished.*

HELEN

Oh thank you—I can't imagine what came over me.

NORA

It *was* hot in that garden. I feel rather wilted myself.

HELEN

I think it was standing so long in the line.

NORA

Can't I get you some water or whisky or something?

HELEN

Oh no—no thank you. This is all I need—(*She seats herself upon the chaise-longue.*)—just to rest a moment.—Let me see, now—you were maid-of-honor, weren't you?

NORA

—Matron. I'm Nora Cope.—That funny-looking usher who went up first—he's my husband.

HELEN

A great friend of my son's, then.

NORA

Oh yes—Peter and Jim are just like *that.*

HELEN (*smiling*)

It's—rather trying for a mother to be a stranger at her own son's wedding.

NORA

Jim was so touched at your coming such a long way for it.

HELEN

The dear boy.

NORA

—But you knew Mary, didn't you?

HELEN

—For the first time, two hours ago.

NORA

Oh, I see.—How does she strike you?

HELEN

She seems to be such a sweet, attractive girl.

NORA

She's all of that, Mrs. White.

HELEN

I'm so glad.—And Jim *is* a nice boy, isn't he?

NORA

Heavens, yes. Jim's a first-rater.

HELEN

I'm sure they will be very happy.

NORA

I think they've a good chance at it.

HELEN

—A chance, only?

[NORA *shrugs.*

NORA

What more can you say for anyone? (*She smiles.*) —Any two, that is. (FANNY SHIPPAN *enters from the hall, in bridesmaid's dress. She is about* NORA'S *age, bluff, smart, likable.* NORA *greets her:*) Hello, Fanny.

FANNY

Listen: where the devil's Mary? I've looked everywhere except—(*She sees* MRS. WHITE.) Oh—

NORA

You've met Jim's mother, haven't you? (*To* MRS. WHITE.) This is Miss Shippan—

HELEN

How do you do?

FANNY

How do you do, Mrs. Hutton. Wasn't it the loveliest—? Oh, I beg your pardon—

[HELEN *smiles faintly.*

HELEN

"Mrs. White," it is now.

FANNY

Of course.—Trust me to forget it, though. (*To* NORA.) Where *is* the girl?

NORA

In there. (FANNY *crosses toward the bedroom door.*) Fanny—

FANNY

Yes, chick?

NORA

Is Noel all right?

FANNY

Well, not so very—

NORA

I'm worried sick about her.

FANNY

So am I. She acts as if she'd never seen champagne before.

NORA

What's to be done?

FANNY

Peter's keeping an eye on her.

NORA

Much good that'll do.

FANNY

I'll go down again myself, in a minute.

NORA

Don't let on to Mary.

FANNY

I should say not. (*She knocks at the door.*) Oh Mrs. H.! Mrs. H.!

[MARY'S *voice is heard from inside.*

MARY

Is that you, Fanny?

FANNY

Yes, Mrs. H.

MARY

Come in, idiot. What's the matter?

[FANNY *goes out, into the bedroom.* JAMES HUTTON *enters from the hall. He is 47, of youthful figure, and with a fine face, rather humorous about the eyes and mouth.*

JAMES

—Resting after the battle, Nora?

NORA

Wasn't it superb, Mr. Hutton? Weren't you proud of them?

JAMES

—Good-looking son I've got, eh?

NORA

But why not? Look at the parents.

JAMES

That's the girl.

[NORA *moved toward the bedroom.*

NORA

I'll—uh—I'll just go see if—(*She knocks on the door.*) Mary! It's Nora.—Anything I can do?

MARY (*from the bedroom*)

Come in, darling! I was just shouting for you.

[NORA *goes out, into the bedroom.* JAMES *lights a cigarette, watching* HELEN. *Finally:*

JAMES

Cigarette?

HELEN

No thank you.

[*A pause.*

JAMES

Do you feel any better?

HELEN

Very much. The—heat bothered me frightfully.

JAMES

Is that all that bothered you, Helen?

HELEN

You mean seeing you again?

JAMES

No, I didn't mean that.

HELEN

Extraordinary, how completely we've escaped each other. How long is it?

JAMES

This is nineteen hundred and—: fifteen years.

HELEN

That's quite a time, in a world of this size.

JAMES

You don't come home very often, do you?

HELEN

Home? America?—Never when I can avoid it.

JAMES

Why did you marry White?

HELEN

Because I wanted to.

JAMES

I met him once. I thought him an exceptionally dull man.

HELEN

That depends on how you look at him.—What is it you think "bothered" me?

JAMES

The whole thing: the sight of your boy being married, quite as lovingly, quite as hopefully, as you married me.

HELEN

Oh. (*She reflects.*) I can only hope they make a better job of it than we did.

JAMES

I'm sure they hope so.

HELEN

I'm told they're very well suited to each other.

JAMES

So were we.

HELEN

—Except in certain particulars.

JAMES

Jim is like me in a great many ways, Helen.

HELEN

Then I suppose I should be sorry for her.

[JAMES *rises and bows slightly.*

JAMES

Madame. (*And seats himself again.*)—I'm very fond of Mary. I was rather afraid he was going to marry Noel—not that there's ever been anything between them, but I've always sensed a kind of—

HELEN

—Noel?

JAMES

Noel Farley—one of the bridesmaids—the prettiest, in fact. Pat Farley's girl—you remember Pat and Alice—

HELEN

I thought she was behaving rather cheaply downstairs.

JAMES

Don't be unkind, Helen. I don't think I've ever seen more tragic eyes in a young girl's head.
[*She smiles.*

HELEN

Trust you to note the tragic eyes, James.
[*He looks at her curiously for a moment. Then:*

JAMES (*small talk*)

—Charming wedding, wasn't it? Charming house, charming garden, charming breakfast—

HELEN

Quite. Her aunt must have money.

JAMES

She has.

HELEN

Is Mary well-off, too?

JAMES

I believe her father left her considerable.

HELEN

Did both parents die young?—She looks strong enough.

JAMES

They went within two weeks of each other, with influenza.

HELEN

How sad. Jim told me next to nothing in his letter. (*A moment.*) Between them they'll have plenty, then.

JAMES

Helen, I'm amazed at you.

HELEN

Why so?

JAMES

Your coldness. Your utter worldliness.

HELEN

Don't let it distress you too much.—Does Jim like his business?

JAMES

Enormously—and works very hard at it.

HELEN

—Youth, health, love, money and an occupation—they seem to have the odds on their side, at any rate.

JAMES

So did we.

HELEN

—So "More shame to us"?

JAMES

More shame to you, let us say.

[*A brief pause.*

HELEN

The years haven't put wrinkles in your cheek, have they, James?

JAMES

Cheek?

HELEN

Cheek.

[JAMES *shakes his head over her.*

JAMES

—Still bitter. It's amazing.

HELEN

Poor dear, life is such a constant surprise to you. —As I remember, you were amazed when I divorced you.

JAMES

That was an act of resentment on the part of a raw young girl. You're past forty now, and should know better.

HELEN

You still don't accept the impossibility of my living with you after what you did—

JAMES

I shan't ever accept it.

HELEN

Well, I give up. In fact I gave up, some time ago, didn't I?

JAMES

I know: that's one of your troubles.

[*She rises.*

HELEN

I'm afraid I must—

JAMES

—Duck—dodge again—get out from under. All right, my dear.

[*She turns on him.*

HELEN

Jim, I—!

[*She stops abruptly and sinks down into another chair. Then:*

Which of us was in the wrong—you or me?

JAMES

—You were. I may have committed adultery, Helen, but I never committed divorce.

HELEN

When you had your affair with—with that woman—

JAMES (*amused*)

Mrs. Bliss, her name was—Kitty Bliss—pretty name—

HELEN

—And a pretty affair! Just pretty enough to destroy our marriage.

JAMES

I think it was you who did the destroying, Helen.

HELEN

How do you figure that?

JAMES

—Through what you made of it. Because, you know, all that *we* had—you and I—*our* province was never touched by it.

HELEN

That's easy enough to say.

JAMES

It's gospel.

HELEN

I'm afraid I don't understand these separate provinces of yours.

JAMES

Mine?—Everyone's!

HELEN

I don't understand them.

JAMES

Well, here's your son Jim: he is attractive to women. His wife Mary is attractive to men. He's twenty-six, she is twenty-two. Is he never to know another woman, or she another man?

HELEN

Know them? But of course!

JAMES

Well, love them, then.

HELEN

Even love them—in a way.

JAMES

—Provided they "behave"—

HELEN

Naturally.

[*He smiles.*

JAMES

—Provided they behave naturally—

HELEN (*indignant*)

I didn't say—

JAMES

Well, I don't think it's very important whether they do or not.

HELEN

Then why any marriage at all?

JAMES

Simply because marriage of one woman to one man for a lifetime is the most civilized and beautiful idea poor humanity has ever conceived of.

HELEN

Imagine your thinking so.

JAMES

I've never thought otherwise.—And any two people, I don't care who they are, who marry for love as we did—as most do—and live before the world as man and wife, create between them something they can never get away from and never hope to duplicate.

HELEN

I wonder if they can't.

JAMES

You know they can't.—It's an entity as real as any child is and it's born without them knowing it, simply of the fact that a man and woman in love have elected to face *all* the facts of life together, from under one roof.

HELEN

So I denied our spiritual child—is that it?

JAMES

That will do, yes.

HELEN

It was for that that I left *you,* Jim.

JAMES

You left me because you found out that I had gone with another woman—*found it out.*

HELEN

Wasn't that almost enough?

JAMES

No. It didn't begin to be.—For following a physical impulse which I share with the rest of the animal kingdom, you destroyed a spiritual relationship which belonged only to us. For an act which in reality was of little or no importance to you, you did me out of my marriage and my home, of the daughter I've always longed for—very nearly out of the son I already had. You did a good, thorough job. And after all, where did it land you?

HELEN

Really, James—

JAMES

Yes really—I should like to know.

HELEN (*rising*)

I think I've had about enough of this, if you don't mind.

JAMES

I suppose that's the real trouble with you: you can't stand very much. You've dodged things all your life. So now you're soft where you should be hard, and hard as nails where you should be soft. I think you might have struck a better balance if you'd weathered that one rough stretch, as you should have. You might still be the once-wronged wife, but you'd be ten times the person you are now.

HELEN (*furious*)

—To-day of all days, from you of all people—you who left a young wife who trusted you utterly for a —for some rotten affair.

JAMES

My God, Helen—what *is* all this stuff about—?

HELEN

I'll tell you what it is! It's—

[*She stops abruptly, as the bedroom door opens and* FANNY *re-enters, talking back through the open door, into the bedroom:*

FANNY

My dear, I'm the ninth richest woman under thirty in North America, and if I can't give pianos for wedding-presents, I don't know who can. (*She closes the door, and crosses toward the hall, smiling amiably at* JAMES *and* HELEN.) Hello, Mr. Hutton—are you taking care of Mrs. *White* all right? (*Her hand flies to her mouth.*) Oh my Lord—

[JAMES *laughs.* FANNY *accelerates her pace toward the hall door, which opens to admit* JIM, *now dressed for departure.*

JIM

Hi, Fanny. What's the report?

FANNY (*passing him*)

She's almost ready.—Another day or two ought to see you off.

[*She goes out.* JIM *enters, stopping in surprise at the sight of his father and mother.*

JIM

Well, hello! (*He looks at them amusedly.*)—Happy reunion?

HELEN

Come here, Jim. (*He goes to her. She kisses him.*) —I think she's lovely.

JIM

I have luck, don't I?

HELEN

I think you both have.

JIM

Lord, I feel good. (*He looks at his watch, then calls in the direction of the bedroom door.*) Oh, *Mary!*

MARY (*from inside*)

Hello, Angel!

JIM (*to* JAMES)

You see? She adores me— (*To* MARY:) What about those fifteen minutes?

MARY

I'm coming!

JIM

I guess we wait.

[*He slumps down into a chair, clasps his hands over his waist, watches* JAMES *and* HELEN, *and begins to whistle a popular song, off-key.*

MARY

Jim!

JIM

Hello!

MARY

Don't do that!

JIM

What?

MARY

Whistle.

JIM

Why?

MARY

It's horrible.

[JIM *looks at* JAMES *in pretended surprise.*

JIM

What can she mean?

JAMES

Do you still take cold baths in the morning, Jim?

JIM

Yes, why?

JAMES

—And do you sing in them?

JIM

Sure, I suppose so.

JAMES

I think I'd give it up, if I were you.

[JIM *stares for a moment, then laughs.*

JIM

What do you advise, Mother?

HELEN

Well, with a musician for a wife I should imagine that simple gasps are better.

JIM

His voice died in his throat.

JAMES

Anything more I can do for you, Son?

JIM

Nothing possibly. You've been a brick.—I told you what I thought about your coming on for it, Mother.

HELEN

I'd have gone around the world, Jimmy.

JIM

You're a great pair, you two.

JAMES

Do you think so?

JIM

I know it. (*A pause.*)—I'm not sure of the ethics of a situation like this, but I'd like to make an inquiry—

JAMES

Go ahead.

JIM

What's it like to be together again? (*He smiles.*) —Excuse me, but I'm in the publishing business.

JAMES

Well, I find it very agreeable.
[JIM *looks to* HELEN.

HELEN

Your father was always an attractive man.

JIM (*suddenly*)

Why'd you leave him, Mother?

HELEN

Why I—that is, I—

JIM

I didn't mean to blurt it out quite like that, but I've always wondered.

JAMES

You mean to say you don't know?

JIM

No.—Of course I suppose you just didn't hit it off. But—

JAMES

We hit it off perfectly—
[JIM *looks to* HELEN.

JIM

Then I don't see—

JAMES

—Except in one respect.

[HELEN *turns away.*

JIM

Oh. Never mind—I'm sorry. (*He looks at his watch again.*) Why doesn't that girl hurry? I hate to wait for people.

JAMES

—It happened that I was once what your mother calls "unfaithful" to her.

JIM (*incredulously*)

You mean you wanted to quit Mother, and—?

JAMES

Oh no—no, never for a minute.

[*A brief pause.* JIM *turns to his mother.*

JIM

But you—?

HELEN (*coldly*)

—But I.

JAMES (*after a moment*)

Well, what do you think of it, Jim?

JIM

Would *you* like to know, Mother?

HELEN

If you like.

JIM

Well, it strikes me it was quite short-sighted, and pretty unjust, to boot.

[*A pause. Then:*

HELEN

—I imagine, however, that Mary would not think so.

JIM

I'm certain she'd think the same. (*There is an awkward silence.* JIM *adds:*)—Marriage is a pretty big job, of course. But it seems to me that if both people use their heads, they can manage it.

JAMES

You may be sure they can.

JIM

I'm not worried. I think *we'll* stay put, all right.

HELEN

That, I've no doubt, will be largely up to you.

JIM

Oh no—it'll be up to Mary. Nothing'd ever unmarry me.

HELEN

I think you would do well, however, to learn to profit by your father's mistake.

JIM

Aren't you being a little rough on him, Mother? (*He smiles engagingly.*)—I tell you what: I'll do that, if you'll teach Mary to profit by yours.

[*The bedroom door opens and* MARY *comes in in her "going-away dress."* JIM *springs up and rushes to her.*

JIM

Oh, what a handsome wench! Can this be mine? (*He takes her hand and turns her around to* JAMES *and* HELEN.)—Is my wife making a good impression?

JAMES

We are speechless.

MARY (*to* JIM)

You *can* whistle, if you like.

[JIM *whistles two notes.*

JIM

Is that enough?

MARY

Plenty.

JIM

—Just now and again, to assert my rights.

[MARY *goes to* HELEN *and* JAMES.

MARY

You've been sweet, both of you.

HELEN

So have you, Mary.

JAMES

Stay that way, will you?

MARY

We'll try, won't we Jim?

JIM

I will. You don't need to.

[*She sinks down into a chair, with a sigh.*

MARY

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life.

JIM

Don't you believe it.

[*He seats himself on the arm of the chair, and takes her hand.*

JAMES (*to* HELEN)

I think we'd better go down again, don't you?

MARY

Oh no, not yet! We aren't leaving till—Peter!

[PETER COPE *enters from the hall. He wears a cut-away, with a white flower in the button-hole, and carries a tray with a bottle of champagne and several glasses. He is about twenty-eight, robust and amiable. At present he is also pleasantly exhilarated.*

PETER

—Just the day for a picnic.

[*He places the tray and napkin on a table near them.*

MARY

Oh Peter—marvellous—

JIM (*simultaneously*)

Good man, Peter.

PETER

They said I couldn't make the stairs with it: I said I could.—Where's my wife, Nora?

MARY

—In there, helping Julie.

PETER

I must speak with my good wife, Nora. (*He moves toward the bedroom, stopping for a moment beside* MARY. *He scowls at* JIM.) Leave go that lady's hand, you naughty navy man. (*He drops his hand gently upon* MARY'S *head.*)—Nice girl. Always remember what Granny says, and don't trust a navy man. (*He calls at the bedroom door:*) Nora?

[NORA *replies from inside:*

NORA

Yes?

PETER

Let down the drawbridge!

[*He goes out into the bedroom.* JAMES *has filled the glasses. He gives one to* MARY *and one to* HELEN.

JAMES

Well, my dears,—here's to a happy, happy life for you.

[*He and* JIM *take glasses.*

JIM (*raising his*)

Here's to one for all of us.

MARY

Yes.

JAMES

Yes.

[*They sip the wine. The strain is now gone. They are all friends together. Their talk runs with a new animation.*

HELEN

What *are* your plans, Jim?

JIM

—From now, you mean?

JAMES

Yes.

JIM

Well, we ought to make town in two hours and a half at the outside.

MARY

I'll drive part of the way.

JIM

You *will* not.—We'll go straight to the hotel. Peter's reserved rooms.—Where do you want to dine, Darling?

MARY

Have we got a sitting-room?

JIM

Yes.

MARY

There, then. It's less trouble.

JIM

That's my idea.—I wired the man at the club to see what revues he could get seats for, and then to get two for the one he couldn't.

MARY

That sounds promising.

JIM

The boat sails at midnight.—When are *you* going back, Mother?

HELEN

Early next month.

JIM

Be in London, will you?

HELEN

I expect so.

JIM

With him?

HELEN

With my husband, yes.

JAMES

—"White" is the name—pretty name.

JIM

We might try to join up for a day or two. I'd like to meet him.

HELEN

Let's arrange to, by all means.

JIM

The Company wants me to make a yearly trip over, starting next May. So I'll be seeing you regularly, I hope.

HELEN

I do hope so, Dear.

JAMES (*to* MARY)

What *I* should like to know is, am I to be called Father, or am I not?

MARY

Yes, Father, you are. (*To* HELEN.)—Did you hear what he's given us for our house in town?

HELEN

Tell me.

MARY

Another floor.

HELEN

—Another f—?

JIM

—Floor. And a top floor, at that. Roofs cost like hell.

MARY

It's to be for my music.

HELEN

But how very nice.—And is Jim to be allowed in it?

MARY

Only on rare occasions. The library's his province.

JAMES (*to* HELEN)

"Province."

HELEN

Be still, James.

JIM

What's the joke?

HELEN

Never mind. (JULIE *enters from the bedroom with two bags, which she places near the center window.*

HELEN *rises, goes to* MARY *and kisses her.*) Good-bye, Mary.

MARY

Good-bye, dear. Thanks for coming and thanks for that whopping cheque and I love you, I really do.
[HELEN *smiles, pats her cheek, turns to* JIM *and kisses him.*

HELEN

Good-bye, Jimmy. Be a good boy.

JIM

Bet your life, Mother. Thanks from me, too.

JAMES (*kissing* MARY)

Good-bye, daughter. I shan't fret about you two.

MARY

Don't you do it.
[JULIE *goes out again, into the bedroom.* JAMES *shakes hands with* JIM.

JAMES

Have a good trip, son.

JIM

Yes, sir.—See you in the autumn, eh?

JAMES

That's right! (*He holds out his arm to* HELEN.) Come—we must dance together now, and scandalize the guests. We owe it to them. (HELEN *takes his arm. They move toward the hall.* JIM *and* MARY *stand together watching them. At the door,* JAMES *stops and turns to them once more.*) I've only one thing to say

to both of you: if at first you don't succeed, don't try again.—Do you second that, Helen?

HELEN

No, I do not. (*She tightens her arm in his.*)—Are you coming?

[JAMES *smiles back at* JIM *and* MARY.

JAMES

—She does, though.

[*They go out into the hall. Waltz music is heard from downstairs until the door closes again after them.* MARY *stands staring at the door. A silence. Then:*

MARY

Oh Jim—how awful—

JIM

I know, Dear—but don't you worry.

MARY

Oh, let's be careful, let's be *careful!*

JIM

We will, Sweet.

[*She sinks down into a chair and gazes in front of her for a moment.* JIM *lights another cigarette.*

MARY (*suddenly*)

You know, it occurs to me I've married you under fairly false pretences.

JIM (*amused*)

Oh? Such as—?

MARY

I've got a lot of bum theories about marriage. You've never heard them.

JIM (*grinning*)

Let's save 'em up for the long winter evenings, shall we?

MARY

I'm afraid I'll forget them.

JIM

—How do they go?

MARY

Well, for one thing, I don't believe much in monopolies.

JIM

No?

MARY

Not for us, anyhow. We're too fond of—people.

JIM

You and me and the great throbbing heart of America—that'll be all right.

MARY

—Not quite so general as that, maybe.

JIM

I shall like you best, Mary.

MARY

So will I you.—But the point is, I don't expect never to see another man, and I don't expect you never to see another girl.—We've simply got to *make* our-

selves see them! Then there won't ever be the danger of them getting to be—to be—

JIM

—Novelties to us?

MARY (*gratefully*)

Exactly.—And I like to be alone a lot. I may seem sullen, but it won't mean anything, really it won't.

JIM

I'll look the other way.

MARY

—"Respect each other's privacy." Oh, that sounds terrible. Hints to the Lovelorn.

JIM

All theories are terrible.

MARY

Of course they are. But what are you going to do?

JIM

Dunno. (*A brief pause.*)—One thing: we're being nice and sensible and modern, aren't we?

MARY

Oh Jim, we've got to be! (JIM's *smile fades.*) I mean it. We've simply got to be a success. All my life I've seen nothing but—

[*She averts her head.*

JIM

—But how can we help but be?! *You—? Me—?*

MARY

It isn't as easy as that, Jim. There's where people

make the mistake. It takes work, and they won't work. *I know it takes work.*

JIM

Mary—

MARY

What?

[*His smile reasserts itself.*

JIM

—Beads of sweat'll be standing out on my forehead.

[*She laughs, and holds her hand out to him in a quick gesture. He takes it and kisses it.*

MARY

I'm a fool.

JIM

Nope. Not a bit.—But I think we'll be all right.

MARY

I know we shall.

[*From the bedroom* NORA *enters, followed by* PETER, *who carries a bag in each hand, and a third under one arm. He goes to the window with them.*

NORA

Listen: Peter says Noel Farley's in a dreadful state downstairs.

PETER

I said—

MARY

How do you mean?

JIM

Noel? What's she doing?

PETER

Well, she keeps laughing all the time, and very loud.

NORA

I was wondering if we oughtn't to do something about her.

[*A pause. Finally.*

MARY

What could we?

JIM

Oh Noel's all right. She's just excitable. (*He goes to the center window.*) How are we to get these bags down, Pete?

PETER

I've got Tom down there under the window. (*He calls.*) Are you ready there, Tom?

[*A voice replies from below:*

VOICE

Right here, Sir.

PETER

Here are the bags! (*He turns to the others.*)—And here's the rope. It's a clothesline. Happy Days, from the laundress.

MARY

Do be kind to my lovely new luggage.

NORA (*to* PETER)

Will it reach?

PETER

Why, its reach exceeds its grasp.

NORA

Hurry up, Stupid, and quit talking.

[*She continues to look troubled over Noel.* PETER *is tying one end of the line to two bags.*

PETER

Don't cross me. Never cross a Cope.

[JIM *leans out of the window and calls cautiously.*

JIM

All right, Tom?

VOICE (*from below*)

All right, Sir.

PETER

—Scratch a Cope, and you find a wife-beater.

JIM

Heave, Petey.

PETER

What've you got in here, Mary—sand?

MARY

My grandfather was a puddler in a steel-mill. It's the old family tools.

PETER (*lifting the bag to the window-sill*)

—Well, I didn't stroke the Vassar crew for nothing.

JIM

What about our get-away, Pete?

PETER

What about it?

MARY

Jim means, can we get away with it?

PETER

I've arranged it all myself, with these two bare hands. You wait here, with the craven bridegroom. When everything's set, I'll tell the orchestra to crash into something appropriate—

MARY

What?

PETER

Well, say "The Bastard King of England."

NORA (*impatiently*)

What, Peter?

PETER

"Mary is a Grand Old Name."

NORA

They won't know it.

PETER (*defiantly*)

But it *is* a grand old name.

JIM

Have them play something I'll recognize.

MARY

What would you?

JIM (*after a moment's thought*)

Dardanella, or the wedding-march.

PETER

It's an inspiration: I'll have them play the wedding-march.

NORA

That's settled.

PETER

—Then you join hands and scurry down the stairs through the hall and out the door, amid rice and rose-petals. Then buckety-buckety up the driveway toward the car you're supposed to take. You'll recognize it by its decorations and wall-mottoes, mostly very obscene. I printed them out myself, last night.—Sure you wouldn't rather go in that car?

MARY

No, no, idiot!

PETER

Then cut across the tennis-court to the south drive, where Tom'll be with my high-powered Pope-Toledo.

MARY

It's miles.

PETER

Rome wasn't built in a day.

MARY

Can we trust him, Nora?

NORA

Look here, Peter—(PETER *turns to her. She examines his face searchingly.*) Yes.

PETER

—Thanks for the vote of confidence. (*He calls out*

the window.)—The South road, near the tennis-court. Forty paces from the old pine. Have you got that, Tom?

VOICE

Yes, sir.

JIM

I'm going to drive, you know.

PETER

He understands.—Now, my boy, I want *your* bag, and I mean to have it. (*He calls again through the window.*) One more to come, Tom!

VOICE

Right, sir.

PETER

I'll meet you with it in the pantry.—Where is it, Massa Jim?

JIM

I'll show you.

[*They move together toward the hall. The door opens and* FANNY *enters.*

FANNY

Listen: something radical's got to be done about Noel.

JIM

Why? What's the matter?

FANNY

I'm afraid Love has reared its ugly head, Jim.

[JIM *turns away, abruptly.*

JIM

You're talking through your hat. (*To* PETER.) Come on—

MARY

Wait a minute.—What's she doing, Fanny?

FANNY

Oh, laughing and carrying on in a generally outrageous manner.

PETER

I saw her glass filled four times at the breakfast.

FANNY

Now all the younger boys are cutting in on her. It's rotten, really.

NORA

Hasn't anyone spoken to her?

FANNY

Jerry and Cooper did. So did I. I've never had such a stare from anyone in my life. Her mother's in the library, dying of mortification.

JIM

You might go down, Pete, and take her for a walk around the garden.

PETER

I tried to. She wouldn't come.

[*A pause.*

FANNY

I'm afraid it'll end by her making some wretched scene or other, and I like Noel.

NORA (*sharply*)

Of course you do. So do we.

[*A pause. Finally:*

FANNY

We're all friends, aren't we? (*She looks at the faces around her.*)—Yes. Well, I saw her maid in the dressing-room. She said Noel hadn't slept a wink in three nights. Why, she didn't know.

[*There is a long silence. Then:*

MARY

You go down, Fanny, and tell her Jim wants to see her up here for a moment before we leave.

JIM

Oh *listen,* Mary—!

MARY

You've got to.

FANNY

I think it's the only thing that'll make her pull up, I really do.

JIM

But I tell you—!

MARY

Jim—

JIM

What?

MARY

I don't want anything unpleasant to happen to-day. It's been too lovely.

JIM

But what on earth can *I* say to her?

FANNY

Just tell her to snap out of it.

JIM

Didn't you?

FANNY

I'm not you, Jimmy.

MARY (*to* FANNY)

Go on, will you?

JIM

No—wait a minute.

MARY

Please, Jim. I'm asking it. (JIM *shrugs helplessly.*) You hold up the signals a few moments, will you Peter?

PETER

Sure.—But about that bag—

JIM

Come on—we'll get it.

MARY

—And see if Aunt Grace is in her room as you go by.

[*At the door,* JIM *turns to her.*

JIM

—I'll be right back.

MARY

Thanks, Jim.

[*He goes out, followed by* PETER.

FANNY

You're a good soldier, Mary.

MARY

So is Noel.

FANNY (*kissing her*)

Good-bye, if I don't see you again. Lots of luck.

MARY

Thanks, Darling. (FANNY *goes out into the hall.* MARY *begins to pull on her gloves. To* NORA:) Well, apparently it's happened.

NORA

Isn't it the devil? You'd think Noel would have sense enough.

[*The seam of a glove breaks.*

MARY

There goes a glove. (*She goes into the bedroom, continuing from there:*) I was probably wrong to ask her to be bridesmaid.

NORA

I don't think so.

MARY

I thought it would put an end to all that wretched talk.

[NORA *seats herself upon the chaise-longue.*

NORA

—Which it did.

MARY

Poor Jim now, though.

NORA

I know.

MARY

It *is* an assignment.

NORA

—He's the only one can do it. It'd be awful for Noel if she was let make a real scene.

[MARY *re-enters with fresh gloves.*

MARY

You know, I think she loves him terribly.

NORA

She'll get over it.

[MARY *ponders.*

MARY

—I wonder doesn't he love her at all—

NORA (*astounded*)

What!?

MARY (*calmly*)

—It's quite possible. I could understand that. And I don't think I should mind—much.

[NORA *laughs.*

NORA

—You say that to-day. Wait a bit—in a month you'll be for scratching out the eyes of anyone who looks at him sideways.

[MARY *seats herself beside her.*

MARY

I should hate to feel like that.

NORA

You won't be able to help it. It's what we all come to. You get a sense of ownership, or something. It starts to work before you know it.

MARY

But I believe Jim has the right to know as many women as he wants to.

NORA

Know them? How?

MARY

In every sense.

NORA

Big-hearted Mary.

MARY

I mean it. It certainly needn't interfere with me—with us.

NORA

Where'd you get all this, anyhow?

MARY

Some of it, talking to Mr. Hutton one night. Most of it by myself.

NORA

Oh, what a fine about-face you're in for, Mary.

MARY

I don't think so.

NORA

—How about your right to know a few men?

MARY

But of course!

[NORA *looks at her curiously for a moment. Then:*

NORA

Another once-loving pair bound for Paris.

MARY

It's one way of avoiding it, Nora—one good way.

[JIM *comes in from the hall.* NORA *rises.*

JIM

Mary, your Aunt Grace is in there, about to burst into tears.

[MARY *rises.*

MARY

Did you tell her good-bye?

JIM

Yes.

MARY

I'll go right in.

JIM

Don't be long.

[MARY *goes out into the hall.*

NORA (*to* JIM)

Good-bye to you, young man. Best of luck.

JIM

Good-bye, Nora. You've been wonderful.

[*He kisses her cheek.*

NORA

You know how we feel about you and Mary, don't you?

JIM

—Just as we do about you and Pete, I should imagine.

NORA

It'll be great fun, the four of us.

JIM

Lord! Won't it, though!

[*There is a sound at the door.* NORA *glances at it.*

NORA

It's Noel. Mind your step, Jimmy.

JIM

Don't you worry.

[NORA *goes swiftly to the door, which opens to admit* NOEL FARLEY. *She is twenty-two, and lovely.*

NORA (*to* NOEL)

Have you seen Peter anywhere?

NOEL

Not for—not for a few minutes, no.

NORA

I must find the man!

[*She goes out, closing the door after her.* NOEL *stands just within the room, looking directly at* JIM, *without moving.*

JIM

Hello, Noel.

NOEL

Fanny said—

JIM

Yes. We—uh—we wanted to see you before we left.

NOEL

That was sweet of you. Where is Mary?

JIM

Farewells to Miss Archer. She'll be here in a minute. (*A brief pause.*) Noel—

NOEL

What?

JIM

Will you do something for us?

NOEL

Why of course, Jim. What is it?

JIM

—After—after you see Mary, quit the party and go on home.

[*There is a silence. Then:*

NOEL (*in a low voice*)

Would you like me to go out the back way?

JIM

I don't think that's necessary, no.

NOEL

—Perhaps it would be better just to hide somewhere, till the rest go.

JIM (*turning away*)

You can do as you like, Noel.

NOEL

That's very kind. Thanks.

JIM

I'm sorry to have disturbed you. Forgive me, will you?

NOEL

I don't know. Does it matter?

JIM

No.

NOEL

That's all right, then. (*They stand looking at each other for a long moment. Finally:*) Do you enjoy it, Jim?

JIM

Do I enjoy what?

NOEL

—Standing there, kissing me.

JIM

My God, Noel.

NOEL

—Mine too, Jim.—It's what you've been doing for a long while now—each time we've been together. What's it matter that you've never been much closer to me than this—so long as you've thought it and wished it?

JIM

You've—had a good deal to drink, haven't you?

NOEL

Yes.—But I've been drunker than this before on no wine at all. And so have you, my dear, dear, dear—

JIM

Oh quit it, quit it, will you?

NOEL

I love you, Jim, and I die hard. There should have been two of you, you know—one for me.

JIM

Listen: have I ever said or done the slightest—

NOEL

—I think there *are* two of you—and one *is*.—No, you haven't. But you want me, and I want you and if it keeps up, someday there'll be hell to pay. I'm telling you.

JIM

Noel—

NOEL

I know. You've always behaved with the most praiseworthy restraint. That's been splendid of you, I suppose, though I rather wish you hadn't. But you can't fool anyone as Irish as me about love. I couldn't have felt as I do about you, if you didn't feel much the same about me. It doesn't happen that way. It takes two.

JIM

I'm sorry, but I don't agree with you.

NOEL

You don't have to.—Nor need you think for a minute that I'm not aware how terribly you love your Mary, and how utterly different it is to what you feel for me. I envy her, but she need never envy me. Not if she's wise.

JIM

How do you mean, wise?

NOEL

She knows.

JIM

Noel, I haven't the remotest idea of what you're driving at, I really haven't.

NOEL

Well, great intelligence never was your long-suit, was it? (*A brief pause. She adds:*)—And, *I've* done a tall lot of thinking, these last few weeks. I've damn well had to.

JIM

I can't see you've got very far.

NOEL

I've gone a tremendous way. I'll tell you where I've arrived, if you like.

JIM

You needn't mind.

NOEL

I'd rather—if *you* don't. (*She waits. He is silent.*)

It's my little pleasure to acknowledge, now, that I'm yours, heart and soul—

JIM

Noel—

NOEL

—But you needn't let it upset you: I'm inclined to glory in it. A day like to-day is fairly rough-going, of course, but I imagine I'll survive it. Because you see I'm just as sure as I am of my name, that part of you is mine. I can't make head or tail of it—I'm still frightfully balled-up in every direction, but of what's between us, I'm quite sure. I wish we'd been something—important to each other. I wish something actual, had happened. Our chances for pulling out of it would be better, then. But we weren't—and nothing has. So here we are, and here we'll be—and you'd better shun me as you would the devil.

JIM

When you see me running from someone, you'll know it.

NOEL

That's the boy!—Spoken like a Yale man.

JIM

Oh, shut up.

NOEL

You can't be indifferent to me, Jimmy Hut—so don't try. (*She softens in an instant.*) Oh come here a minute—let me look at you. Never mind—I'll come there. (*She moves toward him. Her voice breaks:*) Jim—Jim—

JIM

Quit it, Noel.

[*But she does not:*

NOEL

What a handsome groom you were, Jim—I was proud of you, truly I was. I could feel my heart swell to see you, really I could—so straight, and so well turned-out, and so cock-sure of yourself, and so much in need of a beating. I didn't kiss you when the others did, did I? Here—I shall—

[*She puts her hands upon his shoulders, and leans up to him. He turns away, speaking in an agonized voice:*

JIM

Noel—Oh *damn* it, Noel—this is my wedding-day!

[*She drops her head upon his breast with a sudden sob, then turns and leaves him, tears bright in her eyes.*

NOEL

Stupid—stupid—we'd have had a much better chance, if you'd let that go—. Well—(*A pause. She composes herself.*) Is this someone's wine? (*She lifts a full glass from the tray.*) Here's to your great happiness—and may I share in it. (*She drains the glass. There is a knock at the door and a tentative twist of the knob. With an exclamation,* NOEL *sets the glass down upon the tray, dashes the back of her hand across her mouth, leans back on both arms against the table, facing the door, and calls clearly:*) Come in, won't you?

[MARY *enters.*

MARY

Oh hello.—I didn't know who—

NOEL

What do you think, Mary?—Jim's been having me over the coals for enjoying the party too much.

MARY

—Really?

[*She goes to get her handbag from the table.*

NOEL

Yes—can you believe it? But I've sworn I'll be a good girl now. (*She and* MARY *look at each other.* MARY *wins.* NOEL *drops her bantering tone and speaks lowly, honestly:*)—I love you both, Mary. I do love you very much.

MARY

So do we you, Noel.

NOEL

—You know, you have the wisest eyes I've ever seen.

[*There is a silence. Then* MARY *laughs, preferring to laugh.*

MARY

Run along, child. (*She kisses her, briefly.*) We've got to scoot. Good-bye.

NOEL

Good-bye, Jim. Have a good trip.

JIM

Thanks, Noel.

NOEL (*lingering*)

Good-bye, Mary—

MARY

Good-bye, dear.

[NOEL *moves in the direction of the hall.*

NOEL

I—I'll just go—and get my wrap—

[*She goes out. A moment, then* MARY *turns to* JIM.

MARY

I think that was a good thing to do.

JIM

I don't know. Anyway, it's done.

MARY

Thanks. (*She smiles at him.*)—Is it still me, Jim?

JIM (*darkly*)

Mary, I'll—

[*She laughs.*

MARY

Never mind! (*She glances at her watch.*)—You know, *I'm* about ready to start.

JIM

Tugging at the leash, that's what I am.

MARY

I do hope Peter doesn't muff the signals.

JIM

We'll give him three minutes: after that we'll duck anyway.

MARY

—In the meantime, let's form a group called "Alone at Last," shall we?

[*With a sigh, she seats herself on the chaise-longue.* JIM *drops down beside her, his arm around her.*

JIM

Lord knows I'm willing.

[MARY *closes her eyes.*

MARY

—I'm just so tired, and so happy.

JIM

So am I.

MARY

It's like a warm bath.

JIM

It's better.

MARY

I don't expect to have another serious thought for months on end, now.

JIM

If you feel one stealing up on you, fight like hell.

[MARY *opens her eyes again.*

MARY

—All that silly talk of mine about theories and stratagems and what-nots generally—don't mind it. It's just that when I think anything awful might happen to you and me, my heart slides right down to my toes in a panic. It's just—wanting desperately

to guard the most precious thing I've ever had or shall have.

JIM

I know, Darling. That goes for me, too.

MARY

Then it's on—

JIM

You bet it is.—Let's make just one blanket agreement, shall we?

MARY

What is it?

JIM

—Whatever happens, never quit each other.

[*She presses her cheek against his.*

MARY

Never, never.

JIM

—Never in this world.

MARY

In any world. (*A pause. Then suddenly she starts forward.*) What's that music!?

[JIM *goes to the hall door, opens it a crack, listens, then exclaims disgustedly.*

JIM

Dardanella.

MARY

—It may be by way of warning.—You haven't forgotten anything, have you?

JIM

Not a thing.

MARY

As for me— (*Silently and thoughtfully, she ticks seven items off on her fingers, then exclaims:*) Oh!

JIM

What is it? Anything important?

[MARY *rushes to the bedroom door and opens it.*

MARY

Heavens, yes! (*She calls into the bedroom.*) Julie!

JULIE (*from within*)

Yes, Miss?

MARY

Please be sure to tell Aunt—Miss Archer—that I'd like my piano in the house by the time we get back. I don't care about the other things, but I would like the piano.

JULIE

I'll tell her, Miss.

MARY

Thanks!—Good-bye, dear! (*She closes the door, and returns to* JIM.) There. That's— (*Suddenly.*) Shh!

JIM

What?

MARY

It's *it!*

JIM

Is it?

MARY

Yes! Listen!

[*And it is the wedding march.*

JIM

You're right.

MARY

Come on, Sweet!

JIM

Where's my hat?

MARY

Oh never mind your hat.

JIM

All right, the hell with it.

MARY

Give me your hand!

JIM

—Give me yours. I'm the man.

[*Their hands fumble for each other.*

MARY

Quit fooling! Hurry up, or they'll murder us!

JIM

What's the rush? We've got fifty years.

MARY

Are you coming!?

[*He leans and kisses her cheek, hastily.*

JIM

To Mary from Jim, with love. Here we go!

[*He takes her hand and rushes for the hall. From downstairs, rising above the wedding march, comes the sound of shouts and cheers and laughter. From outside the house, motors starting, electric horns blowing. Through it all, is heard a call from different voices, men's and women's:* "*Good Luck!*" "*Best of Luck!*" "*Good Luck!*"

Curtain.

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

Scene: The music-room, on the top floor of the Huttons' house, in uptown New York, near the East River. May, of this year. Eleven o'clock in the morning.

The music-room is unlike most music-rooms, in that it is comfortable, attractively furnished in the modern style and very sunny. Just off center at back, is a high and broad studio-window. There is a fireplace in the right wall, center, of very simple design, in white plaster. The walls are of smooth gray, without pictures. The floor is dark, and bare except for two or three small rugs of plain color. The furniture is low and comfortable. The curtains at the window are of green, in some lively material. There is a bowl of white flowers on a large piano. There are no wall-brackets, the room being lighted at night entirely by four lamps, two made of silvered globes with plain, low shades of coral paper, two of glass globes filled with water, with shades of the same color as the curtains.

Entrance is from the hall, down left.

At Rise: RICHARD PARISH *is seated at the piano, playing from a handwritten score on the stand before him.* MARY *leans against the piano, listening.* RICHARD *is a few months younger than* MARY, *that is to say between 27 and 28. He has no manners but natural manners, no graces but a natural grace. This, plus the particular spirit which moves him from within, must be the sum of his charm, for he is not at all handsome, not in the*

least well-dressed and with no gift whatever for making pretty speeches. He plays for a moment or two without speaking. Then:

RICHARD (*as he plays*)

This is for the wood-winds. There's no brass at all in the first part. Do you think I need it?

MARY

Wait a minute. (*He plays on a little further.*) No.

RICHARD

I didn't think so.

[*He goes on playing.*

MARY (*suddenly*)

There! *That's* what I don't like.

RICHARD

This?

MARY

Yes.

RICHARD

What's the matter with it?

MARY

It's sloppy.

RICHARD

Sloppy!—The way I play it?

MARY

The way you wrote it.

[*Scowling,* RICHARD *tries several variations of the same theme. Finally he repeats one.*

RICHARD

—Is that "sloppy"?

MARY

No.

RICHARD

Neither was the first. I think the first was better.

MARY

That's a pet idea of yours. It isn't always right.

RICHARD

A musician needs a man with a hammer just the way a painter does.

MARY

—Man with a hammer?

RICHARD

—To hit him over the head when a thing's finished.

MARY

Don't fool yourself that *you* do.

RICHARD

You think I'm lazy—

MARY

Maybe.

RICHARD

Mary—

MARY

What?

RICHARD

Oh hell.

MARY

Richard, *I* know the gift you have— Oh yes, it is a gift!—And I've told you you can have this room and this piano every morning you want and all morning and all alone. I don't ever come hanging around except when I'm expressly asked to. And—

RICHARD (*grinning*)

You're invited.

[*He leaves the piano, and seats himself facing her.*

MARY

Thanks— How long do you figure it will take you to finish your wretched ballet?

RICHARD

About two months. Less, if you'll help me.

MARY

—*If* I'll—?—It's a godsend.

RICHARD

How's that?

MARY

Jim's off for his trip abroad pretty soon, and I'd like something to help me stand it. Even the children aren't enough. I want a job.

RICHARD

Why don't you go with him?

MARY

I don't know. I just never do. Once I did, the first year. Then the next year I was about to have a baby, and the next year Aunt Grace was about to have an appendix, and the next year I'd just had

another baby, and last year both of them had whooping-cough and this year, when I could go, I won't.

RICHARD

Don't you want to?

MARY

Heavens, yes. But I've got some crazy notion that married people need holidays from each other, so I'm making a firm stand. Six weeks. That's no picnic, you know.

[*She seats herself upon the sofa.*

RICHARD

You're a funny pair.

MARY

We're a nice pair, don't you think?

RICHARD

—Sure, very nice.—Terribly in love, too, aren't you?

MARY

Oh yes, terribly.

RICHARD

How long is it?

MARY

Six years the tenth of July.

RICHARD

Pretty good.

MARY

It keeps getting better.

RICHARD

I suppose you aren't likely ever to crash now unless one of you falls in love with someone else.

MARY

I don't think Jim and I could crash even on that.

RICHARD

No?

MARY

No.

RICHARD

Well, there's not much chance it'll happen, is there?

MARY

It might. To Jim, it might.

RICHARD

And if it did—?

MARY

My one fear in the world is that he wouldn't quite understand how little it meant to me.

[*A silence.*

RICHARD

I guess there's nothing to be said to that.

MARY

There it is.

RICHARD (*after a moment*)

D'you know, I can't tell you how much I grant you two. And it's a funny thing, because you're the kind of people I've resented all my life. I never expected

to believe that you could be so—so damned valuable. I used to curse into my beard whenever I passed a house like this. I used to spit on the pavement whenever a decent-looking motor-car passed me. I don't anymore, because I've found two among you whom I know to be of absolutely first importance in all the ways I value. You're hard in the right places, you're wise with a most beautiful wisdom and for your life as you live it, I've nothing but salutes and cheers. You're a revelation to me, Mary.

MARY (*overcome*)

Why Richard—

RICHARD

Why, your grandmother. It's true, and I mean it. (*He rises and goes to the piano.*) What about this bollicking ballet? Do you really want to help me get it down?

MARY

I ask for nothing better. The babies are in the country with Aunt Grace. They're thriving. I'll spend four days a week in town and you can come out for week-ends. She's got a Knabe. It's old, and the lacquer's cracked, but it's sweet as a nut.

RICHARD

When does Jim sail?

MARY

Saturday. He was to have gone on the *Paris* to-day but he couldn't get a cabin. Now it's not until the *France*, May fifteenth. I can go to work on the sixteenth.

RICHARD

Lord, it'd be wonderful. You know you *have* got a pretty good ear.

MARY

I've got a first-rate ear, and I can write the stuff down like a house on fire.

RICHARD

Imagine finishing it!

[*A brief pause. Then:*

MARY

How many things *have* you finished, Richard?

RICHARD

Oh be still. [JULIE *enters with a tray containing a glass of milk and a plate of sandwiches.* RICHARD *frowns at it.*)—Speaking of babies, I think I can live without this milk every morning.

MARY

It builds you up. See what a big girl I am.

[JULIE *places the tray on a low table beside* RICHARD.

JULIE

Miss Shippan just telephoned to—

MARY

Fanny Shippan? Telephoned—!?

JULIE

She arrived last evening, and she wished to know if you were lunching at home, and if so—

MARY

I hope you told her Yes, by all means.

JULIE

I did, Miss.

MARY

Thanks, Julie. Set two extra places, then, will you?

JULIE

She said she would not be able to stay. She just wanted to come in for a moment.

MARY

I'll persuade her.

JULIE

Very well, Miss.

[*She goes out.*

MARY (*to* RICHARD)

That's terribly exciting. She was one of my bridesmaids. I haven't seen her in two years.

RICHARD

Where's she been?

MARY

Oh all over.

RICHARD

I get a feeling in this house that everyone's either just going up a gang-plank or just coming down one—

MARY

That doesn't go for me. I wish it did.—Richard—tell me the way the story goes—of the ballet, I mean.

RICHARD

I don't want you getting the story mixed up with it. *You're* to listen to *notes.*

MARY

Do you suppose for a minute I can think of anything else when I hear them?

[*He looks at her sharply.*

RICHARD

No. As a matter of fact, I don't believe you can.

MARY

Then tell me.

RICHARD

'Tisn't all worked out yet. It probably never will be.

MARY

Don't you believe it won't!

RICHARD

Probably never get put on, anyway. Probably cost a fortune to put it on.

MARY

Isn't the Russian Ballet rich?

RICHARD

I'd rather an American did it.—No—not the Metropolitan nor any of the Art Boys, either. I'd like some good, hard-boiled revue-manager. Then they'd dance, by God, not waddle around picking dream-flowers off the ground-cloth. And I'd have an orchestra for whom the world didn't end with Debussy.

MARY

I should think you could find a manager.

RICHARD

My only hope is that it *might* be amusing.

MARY

Do tell me how it runs.

RICHARD

Well, to begin with, it's for children.

MARY

Entirely?

RICHARD

Yes. It's a downright fairy-story. If older people want to like it, that's their look-out.

MARY

I see.

RICHARD

It's called "The Friendly Germ." Of course the whole thing is completely cock-eyed, but I think it adds up to make sense.

MARY

What's in it?

RICHARD

Well, there's a lot of religion in it, and a lot of test-tubes and microscopes and down-town at lunch-hour and Madison Square Garden with a hockey-match and that joint in Harlem where I've got a new job

playing the piano from twelve to two—it's a swell place, really—and oh, Lord, there's a lot in it really.

MARY

Is there any form to it?

RICHARD

Of course there's form to it. What do you mean, "Is there any form to it?"?

[*He rises.*

MARY

How does it *run,* I say!?

RICHARD

Well, the first scene's at the Church Conference in the Middle Ages to decide how many angels could dance on the point of a needle. That's the Gregorian stuff you get in the opening movement. My mother used to wheeze it out on an old harmonium in a frame-church at Single River, in Minnesota, and didn't I soak it up, though. That, and the music my father's saw-mill made, and the water. Well, I see the entire chorus in the same wooden robes you see in primitives, and they move like wood, and oh Lord, it sounds terrible—

MARY

No it doesn't.

RICHARD

Then the second scene's in the top tower of the American Needle Building on lower Broadway. A thin white room, sort of a conical shape, up to a point. They've developed a needle with the finest point in the world. They're going to measure it under a microscope and

broadcast the happy news to God's whole great big monkey-house. What you hear is the music from the street below: curb brokers, street-cars, motors, feet, frosted chocolate milk-shakes being sucked through straws—

MARY

Exciting!

RICHARD

'Think so?—Well, they march up to the microscope, take a peek and fall back in astonishment. For cat's sake what is it? The celestial music begins—curtain —then curtain up again on the field of the microscope—

MARY

What?!

[RICHARD's *gestures become broader.*

RICHARD

—The field of the microscope—round—enormous—just as you'd see it—a big ground-glass disc, measured off into square areas, tilted back a little.

MARY

Richard!

RICHARD

It's alive with angels, dancing—no wings, you know, —they just know how to use their arms. The germ's a very peculiar individual, with very dancy feet. The angel named Mike, who's our hero, if there is a hero in the cock-eyed thing—he's trying to ride the germ. Finally, just as he gets on his back, you see an enor-

mous instrument come down like that, and separate 'em from the others and push 'em up on a glass-slide and off the scene. So far so good?

MARY

I love it. But watch out that your angel doesn't go whimsical on you.

RICHARD

Not a chance.

MARY

That's the danger, though.

RICHARD

This angel is a real guy. He's superb, this angel. He's a kind of Lindbergh.

MARY

Poor thing—what do they do with him?

RICHARD

He and the germ are taken home by the president of the Needle Works to his apartment.—There sits his lovely daughter, who has been ailing, poor girl. She's being dosed with thyroid extract, with no results. Here's something new to amuse her. All right: Mike and his funny friend get in among the thyroid and grow up to life size.

MARY

Does it work that way?

RICHARD

Ask a doctor.—You see, the germ—

MARY

You might call him Pat—

RICHARD

I intend to. Pat's the germ of the dance: he infects everyone within reach with it. The two of 'em become a sensation. Talk of the town, talk of the country, talk of the world. Mike can do anything—he's the perfect man. Big promoters try to syndicate him. Flying for profit. Dowagers cut each others throats to get him to dine. Come and meet our Winged Lion. Drawing-room flying at nine, by the celestial Mike. Come and get bitten by Pat, and feel your old legs stir again. Then the girl begins to want Mike all for her very own—the way you want Jim all for yours—the way everyone in love turns fool and says "No shares! This is all mine!"

MARY

They don't, though.

RICHARD

Oh yes they do!—But Mike can't stand it. She gets desperate. All mine! All mine!—There's a chase across the roof of the apartment. They go over the edge—

[*He stops, as* JIM *enters.*

MARY

Why Jim! Hello!

JIM

Hello, Darling. Hello, Parish. How are you?

RICHARD

Fine, thanks. I've just been boring Mary stiff with a couple of Tales of Hoffman.

MARY

He *has* not.—Jim, who do you think telephoned? Fanny. She got in last night. She's coming for lunch, I hope.

JIM

Good. Only I won't be here.

MARY

Why? Where are you off to?

JIM

London first, then—

MARY

What do you *mean?!*

JIM

The French Line telephoned they had a cancellation just this morning, and could put me on the *Paris.*

MARY

Jim!

JIM

She sails at one. Julie's packing bags. I've got to go on account of Proctor. He's off for some other god-forsaken place on the twentieth. I've cabled him I'm coming with a contract for his next three books. He's too good to miss, really.

MARY

I hate his stuff, I hate it!

JIM

He sells, though. If it was really good stuff, I could put the trip off a year.

MARY

But one o'clock!

JIM

It isn't twelve yet. I've got lots of time. Father'll be up with some papers to be signed in a minute, then we'll tear for the river. Do you want to come to the dock?

MARY

Do I want to come to the dock! Oh, I'll kill you, I'll—!

RICHARD (*rising*)

Here I go.—Lunch some other day, Mary.

MARY

Do you mind?

RICHARD

Not a bit. (*To* JIM.) Good-bye. Have a good trip.

JIM

Thanks. Anything I can do for you in Paris?

RICHARD

You might tell the Art Boys on the Left Bank not to talk quite so much.

JIM

All right, I will.

MARY

I'll telephone you, Richard.

RICHARD

Will you do that? Fine! Good-bye.

MARY

Good-bye! (RICHARD *goes out,* MARY *rushes into* JIM'S *arms.*) Oh Jim, I hate it! It was bad enough not going last year. Now it's worse.

JIM

Come on with me, darling. It's a big cabin.

MARY

No. I can't.

JIM

We'd have fun.

MARY

Shut up, shut up!

JIM

I think this is all rot, you know—this enforced-holiday business.

MARY

Maybe it is.—When will you be back?

JIM

By July—the tenth surely, now. Where's your party for the anniversary to be—here or in the country?

MARY

Here. I'm going to keep the house open till the fifteenth anyway. Do make it in time, Jim. It's important to me. I'm a fool about Christmas and birthdays and things like that.

JIM

You leave it to me. I'll be here.
[MARY *smiles.*

MARY

—I've always said if we got safely past the sixth—

JIM

It's been a good go, hasn't it, darling?

MARY

Hasn't it, though?

JIM

I'd do it again, wouldn't you?

MARY

Oh, maybe I wouldn't!

JIM

Kiss me, please. Very small: I've got a boat to catch.
—Thanks.

MARY

Are you sure you've everything you'll need?

JIM

No, but I'll manage. I made a list and told Julie most of it. She's—(*The telephone rings.*) That must be the country. I put the call in downstairs—

MARY

Aunt Grace won't be there, you know.

JIM

I wanted to tell Jimmy good-bye.
[*He goes to the telephone.*

MARY

You're sweet, Jim.

JIM

So's Jimmy. (*He takes the telephone.*) Hello. All right. (*A moment.*) Hello—Is that you, Frederic? Yes.—Tell Sabina to bring young Jim to the telephone, will you? Thanks—(*He turns to* MARY.) Come here, Darling. Don't stay so far away. (*She comes to him. He stands with his arm around her, and the receiver to his ear. They talk on at random until* SABINA *comes to the telephone.*) How's your special account? All right?

MARY

Bursting.

JIM

What are you going to do about that garden on the roof here?

MARY

Gravel costs enormously.

JIM

Let's have it, anyway.

MARY

I'll order it then.

JIM

Is Collins behaving himself better?

MARY

Some. He's hauled the manure up, at least.

JIM

Tell him I said we're very fond of him, but this next month decides it.

MARY

I did, yesterday.

JIM

Did it ever occur to you that Sabina might drink?

MARY

No. Of course she doesn't.

JIM

I don't like that nose much.

MARY

It's the weather does that. Once I tried to get her to take some brandy for a stomach-ache, and she nearly left in a pet.

JIM

See if you can't get her to work regularly on Mimsie's legs. Massage or something.

MARY

But my dear, *all* babies' legs are like that!

JIM

I'm scared of her growing up with fat legs. Girls ought to have thin legs.

MARY

She will.

JIM

—If she's any daughter of yours.

MARY

—If she's any daughter of mine.

JIM

Don't have any vaccinations or anything till I get back, will you?

MARY

I wasn't planning any.

JIM

Just keep cool with Coolidge.

MARY

You betcha.

JIM

What'll you be doing all the time?

MARY

Music with Richard, mostly. He's got a grand idea for a ballet.

JIM

Where'd you find him, Mary?

MARY

—Richard? He was at the Rosalskys' that night. Don't you remember?

JIM

Oh yes. (*A moment.*)—He's not the kind that makes passes, is he?

MARY

Richard?—Not in the least.

JIM

If anyone does, haul off and paste him one for me.

MARY

No one will.

JIM

I would.

MARY

Most men have more manners.

JIM

Mary.

MARY

What?

JIM

I'm in love with you.

MARY

—But what about my children?

JIM

Forget 'em. Come with me in my death-car.

MARY

When do we leave?

JIM

How would, say, twelve-thirty do? We could— (*He turns to the telephone.*) Sabina? Yes. I'm going off to-day instead of next week, Sabina, and I'd like to say good-bye to Jimmy. Is his face clean enough? Yes. Oh yes indeed. I will, Sabina—and Matthew

and Mark and Luke, too. Thanks very much.—Hello, Jimmy! How are you? Good! What have you been doing, riding Punch? Does he go any faster? Well, he's still pretty stiff, you know—it was a hard winter.—What's that? He didn't! You tell him for me he's old enough to know better than that, and if he doesn't he can't *come* on the front lawn. That's right. Listen, Jimmy: I'm going on the big boat this morning.—No, darling—next time maybe. I'm awfully sorry, but they almost didn't have room for me, even. What shall I bring you? Yes.—Yes— Yes, if I can find one. Yes. Yes. Is that all?—Well, anything else you think of, just tell your Mother, and she'll write me. Good-bye, darling—(*He smacks a resounding kiss.*) —Did you get it? (*A moment.*) Yes, so did I. Good-bye, Jimmy. You be a good boy and I will too. Kiss Mimsie good-bye for me and tell her to keep that thumb out of her mouth or I'll beat the tar out of her.—Of course there's tar in her! There's tar in everyone. Why, I knew a man once, and—

MARY

I want to speak with Sabina a minute.

JIM

—And he was nothing *but* tar!—Call 'Bina, will you Jim? Your Mother wants to tell her something—Good-bye, Angel.—You bet I won't! I'll bring a bagful.

[MARY *takes the telephone.* JIM *begins to consult a list.*

MARY

Good-bye, Darling. Yes, to-morrow, sure. No—after

your nap. Yes, he understands. Of course, he'll tell the Captain. He'll—Sabina? Yes.—Is everything all right? Mimsie? Where? Oh dear. Have you got some of that boric-powder? That's right. And we'd better cut down on the vegetables to-morrow and Sunday. No—the milk of magnesia—just a little in the formula. I'll be out early to-morrow afternoon. If she starts running a fever telephone me, and I'll motor out to-night. Good-bye. (MARY *puts down the telephone and turns to* JIM.) I'll see that Julie's got everything straight.

JIM

She has, I'm sure. Stay, dear. I'll go down myself when Fanny comes.

MARY

What's that? A list?

JIM

Yes. Checked, mostly. Oh, would you tell Peter I can't play golf with him Wednesday—

MARY (*a mental note*)

—Peter—golf—Wednesday.

JIM

Let's see, now: (*He reads the list and checks the items.*) "Telephone Father"—check. "Telephone country"—check. "Kiss Mary"—(*He kisses her.*)—check. "Don't forget passport"—(*He feels for it.*) "Tell Julie plenty underwear"—check. "Tell Mary love her"—(*He turns to her.*)—Love you.

MARY

You are good, and kind.

JIM

Check. "About liquor supply—"—If you need anything, telephone Trotter at the Club.

MARY

Trotter?

JIM

Trotter.

MARY

—Liquor—Trotter—Club.

[JIM *looks at the list silently for a moment. Then as he folds it up:*

JIM

"Keep out of draughts, Don't eat starchy foods, pump up bicycle-tires and be at foot of West 14th Street at ten minutes to one."

MARY

Ten minutes to one. Six weeks. Jim, Jim, Jim, Jim.

JIM

Aw Mary—

MARY

I'm going to weep.

JIM

Blink your eyes. Swallow.—That's the girl.

MARY

Write me all the time. Cable me every minute.

JIM

You bet I will.

MARY

Don't have a French doctor even for a cold.

JIM

No.

MARY

—If the ship starts to sink, kick all the women and children out of the way and grab the biggest life-belt and—

JIM

You bet.

MARY

—Say your prayers night and morning—and—(*Suddenly she clings to him.*) Oh Jim—Jim—

JIM

Oh cut it out, will you?

[*He kisses her. A moment, then* JAMES HUTTON'S *voice is heard from the hall.*

JAMES

Jim? Mary? (MARY *leaves* JIM'S *arms. He goes swiftly to the window, and stands there with his back to the room, composing himself. There is a silence. Then again* JAMES'S *voice, nearer:*) Are you up here, Mary?

MARY

Yes. Hello, Father. So's Jim. Come on in! (*Then softly, to* JIM.) Darling—come here—

[JIM *comes to her.* JAMES HUTTON *appears in the doorway.*

JIM

Hello, Father.

JAMES

I—er— There was a young woman on your doorstep. She asked me to announce her: A Miss F—

[FANNY *bursts in from the hall.*

FANNY

—It's Fanny! Whoopee! It's Fanny!

MARY

I don't believe it!

[*They embrace.*

FANNY

My dear girl, what fun!

MARY

But you look simply stunning!

FANNY

—If that means fat, I'll have your heart out and— Hello, James, my boy. (*She goes to* JIM *and shakes his hand.*) How is the book business?

JIM

Hello, Fanny. It's great you're back.

FANNY

I'm staying for years. (*She seats herself.*) This rock shall stir from its firm base as soon as I.

JIM

What's the matter? Didn't you like the life among the British?

FANNY

Listen: if ever we have another war with England, I want it understood right here and now, *I* was the one that fired the first shot.

MARY

But my dear—the papers were full of you!

FANNY

I had a salon. I honestly had a salon. I can't tell you what I've been through. Last night when I saw Fifth Avenue, I cried into my lap for fully twenty minutes. It's a nice little city you've got here, friends. It's going to grow. (*To* JIM.) You're not really sailing for that place to-day?

JIM

At one o'clock.

FANNY

Well you're simply crazy, that's all. How are your babies, Mary?

MARY

Wonderful.

FANNY

—Still, it's nice to be in an uninteresting condition again—wot?

MARY

My dear, I've gone mad: I'm supporting three dressmakers.

FANNY

I'm dying to see the new one. Boy or child? I forget.

MARY

Child. Name of Mary. Her mother was a dancing-girl. Come out with me to-morrow, will you? I'll hold a one-man exhibit.

FANNY

I'd love it.—Isn't she pretty, Mr. Hutton?

JAMES

I've always contended that.

FANNY

—I was afraid I might find just a mother. (*To* JIM.) You poor boy, going off on a boat. Don't let them put you at the Captain's table. I was—and the strain was too much: my wrists gave way. Twice I spilled gruel on my bib. It was a fearful trip. Lord knows I'm no beauty, but I'm young and I'm sound, and yet the only real attention I called forth from the whole big *Aquitania* was from a middle-aged professor at Tulane University, named Regan. I said that I was happy as a lark, and he said, But is a lark really happy? Can you bear it?

MARY

Stop, Fanny! We were just feeling so nice and sad over parting.

FANNY

—New York. My Lord, its wonderful. You forget how wonderful it is. Who'll put me up for the Chamber of Commerce? For the last three months I've been unfurling American flags from my blouse on every occasion. From now on I'm going to be just a home girl. No more nasty, drafty castles for Fanny.

JIM

You weren't presented at Court, were you? There was a rumor.

[*He rises, and moves toward the hall.*

FANNY

James, I was there with ostrich-plumes in my hair. It was a riot. The queen swooned, and the king was carried out screaming. They say that down in White-Chapel the boys were—oh, good-bye—

JIM

Don't stop. I'm just going downstairs a minute to close a bag or two.

MARY (*rising*)

I'll—

JIM

No darling—really—I'll be right up. Have you got those letters, Father?

JAMES

Miss Anderson's in the library. She'll take your signature.

[FANNY *is groping in her handbag.*

JIM

Good.

FANNY

'Wait a minute, Jim. 'Arf a mo'. Presents—pretty presents. (*She gives a small box to* MARY.) These are for you, Mary.

MARY (*opening the box*)

"These?" That means earrings.

FANNY

I got them in Venice, for a certain popular song.
[MARY *holds up the earrings.*

MARY

Fanny!

FANNY

Tush, child. I could give pearls, and never feel it.

MARY

You angel. They're simply gorgeous.
[*She puts them on.* FANNY *offers a larger box to* JIM.

FANNY

—And these, James, are for you, to hold your pants up. (JIM *takes the box.*)—Hand-painted braces, for the unexpected guest. I think the scene is from Manon.

JIM

Fanny, you're a girl after my own heart.

FANNY

No, Darling—I was once, but Mary was too quick for me.

JIM

I'll sail in them.
[JAMES *looks at his watch.*

JAMES

You won't sail at all, if you go on this way.
[JIM *looks at his watch.*

JIM

There's something in what you say.
[*He goes out.*

FANNY

—Lovely boy, really lovely.—Honestly, Mary, I never saw two happier looking people in my life.

MARY

We're pretty sunk over this trip, just at present.

FANNY

—Most people I know would be cheering. You're in luck. You don't realize it.

MARY

Oh yes we do!

FANNY (*to* JAMES)

It isn't just put-on, is it?

JAMES (*smiling*)

I don't think so.

FANNY

I've got a little skeptical about marriage: me, who had such faith. Paris is simply alive with people you know, getting divorces.

MARY

Well, *I* think it's sickening.

FANNY

—So do I. What I hate most, is what it does to their what-do-you-call-its—souls—characters. Honestly, just listening to their tales, I felt like Bad Fanny, the

wickedest woman in Bridgeport. I claim it shows in their faces. You wouldn't know Susie Price.

MARY

She isn't, too!

FANNY

Indeed she is!—Her precious little individuality was being stifled.

MARY

Her what?!—I didn't know she had one.

FANNY

Home-life developed it.—But of course as soon as the decree is handed down, she's going to try again with some fifth-rate Englishman. She's living with him now in the South of France somewhere.

MARY

It *is* vile.

FANNY

—Just thank your stars, Girlie. Because there's something awfully wrong with marriage.

MARY

There's something awfully wrong with the people who *get* married.

FANNY

How are Peter and Nora? Are they all right?

MARY

Now don't go *looking* for trouble, Fanny.

FANNY

Catch me! These days I spread oil wherever I go. You have to.

JAMES

Did *you* get to the South at all, Fanny?

FANNY

—Of France? No, worse luck. (*To* MARY.) Oh but I must tell you. Zoe Evans was at Cannes, and—

MARY

I don't know her.

FANNY

I know you don't. But she knows Jim and she said she saw you and him two or three times at—what's the name of that little place up in the mountains back of Antibes? St. Paul du—something—St. Paul du Var! And she was going to speak to you, only—

MARY (*carefully*)

When was that?

FANNY

Last May.

MARY (*more carefully*)

Oh yes.

FANNY

—Only she couldn't get Jim's eye and you both looked so devoted, she concluded you were there to escape Americans. So she didn't. They thought at the inn you were a run-away couple, living in—well, it isn't sin to the French, is it? They'd whipped up quite a nice illicit romance about you. Clever Mary.

It must have been fun. Zoe said the *patrone* told her you'd taken the sweetest little studio-place with actually a bathroom. I didn't even know you were over. Why didn't you look me up?

MARY

Well, it was—

FANNY

You *were* trying to avoid Americans!

[*A moment.*

MARY

It was the shortest kind of a trip.

FANNY

You didn't run into Noel, did you? Someone told me she was down there somewhere on the Riviera—or maybe it was Rome.

MARY

No, we didn't.

FANNY

Apparently she's got an idea that she can write or paint or something—

MARY

And can she?

FANNY

I doubt it. There's a girl I never could make out.

MARY

Couldn't you, Fanny? I don't think Noel's hard.

FANNY

I must admit, I never worked much over her.—Your house is just as sweet as ever, Mary.

MARY

I love it.

FANNY

You've changed this room.

MARY

I'm forever changing it.—We're going to put gravel on the roof and make a garden.

FANNY

—Divine.—What time are you going out to-morrow?

MARY

How's three o'clock?

FANNY

That's fine for me.—Sure you want me?

MARY

I should say I do. It's too marvellous, having you back. Are you at the apartment?

FANNY

Yes.

MARY

I'll stop by for you at three, then.

FANNY

I'll be hanging out the window. What time is it now? Oh good lord!—Good-bye, Mr. Hutton—come and dine some night with Mary, will you?

JAMES

I should be glad to.

FANNY (*to* MARY)

Don't come down with me, dear—honestly. I'm going on the run.

MARY

All right, I shan't.—Shout to Jim as you go by. His room's just below.

FANNY

I'll do that.—The poor lamb, having to leave his Mary.

MARY

Oh he doesn't mind.

FANNY

His face *looked* it.

MARY

Thanks a thousand times for the earrings.

FANNY

There are no two ears I'd sooner see 'em hang from, Dearie. (*She kisses her.*) Three o'clock, then.

MARY

Three o'clock.

[FANNY *goes out.* MARY *turns slowly, thoughtfully, and stands looking into space. There is a long silence.* JAMES *is watching her. Finally:*

JAMES

Mary—

MARY

Yes?

JAMES

I don't think I should jump to any silly conclusions, if I were you.

MARY

Wouldn't you, Father?

JAMES

No.

MARY

Jim went abroad alone last year. I wasn't with him.

JAMES

No—nor was anyone else.

MARY

You don't think so.

JAMES

I'm sure of it. (*A pause. Suddenly* MARY *goes to the telephone and takes up a telephone-list. She finds the number and puts the receiver to her ear.* JAMES *rises.*) What are you doing?

[MARY *does not answer. Another pause. Then:*

MARY

Plaza 2476.

JAMES

Whom are you calling, Mary?

[MARY *does not answer. Another pause. Then:*

MARY

Hello, is this Plaza 2476?—May I speak with Mrs. Farley, please.—Mrs. Hutton, Mrs. James Hutton.

Oh.—Well perhaps *you* could tell me—I wanted to ask Mrs. Farley for Miss Noel's address. Yes.

JAMES

Mary, this is utterly ridiculous. It wasn't Jim at all. The Evans girl was simply mistaken. And even if she wasn't—

MARY (*to the telephone*)

Yes? "Villa May." Yes. "St. Paul—St. Paul-du-Var —Alpes Maritimes"—Yes, I have it. Thanks very much. No—that's all I wanted. Thank you.

[*She replaces the receiver and stands looking down at the table.*

JAMES

You know, this isn't fair at all. This is—

MARY

I know Jim, Father, and I know Noel. And if they were there together—

[*She cannot finish.*

JAMES

That's a very hasty conclusion, my dear, and so far as I can see, entirely without foundation.

MARY

It's true, Father.

JAMES

How do you know it's true?

MARY

I feel it in my bones. (*She averts her face. Her breath escapes her in a cry.*) Oh—horrible—

JAMES

I can't for the life of me see how you can assume any such thing on any such evidence.

MARY

It's true, it's true!

[*A pause.*

JAMES

—And suppose it were—then what?

MARY

Then it's not me he wants. He wants her.

JAMES

Good heavens, Mary—

[*She turns on him sharply.*

MARY

What do you think, then? Is it both of us he wants?

JAMES

Jim loves you as few women are loved.

MARY

He could hardly love me—and go with her, could he?

JAMES

Couldn't he, Mary?

MARY

No!

JAMES

—It's not conceivable, is it?

MARY

If it were, I shouldn't let it be!

JAMES

Ah—I see.

MARY

I'm not doing any sharing—I'm not going any halves with—with—oh, I can't say her name, now.

JAMES

You'll never be called upon to share what you and Jim have.

MARY

He's taken the whole beautiful thing in his hands and done that with it.

[*With a gesture of breaking it in two.*

JAMES

If what you suppose has happened *has* happened, one good crass fact explains it.

MARY

—It might have once. Not now.

[*A moment. He watches her. Then:*

JAMES

But Mary you must know—

MARY

I know that six years ago Jim and I were married.

JIM (*from the hall below*)

Oh Mary! (*She does not answer.*) Darling—!

[*She goes to the doorway and calls:*

MARY

Yes?

JIM

Where are those shiny new studs of mine?

MARY

They're on the dressing-table in my room.

JIM

Right!—You're all ready, aren't you?

MARY

Yes, I'm ready.—We ought to leave in two minutes!
[*She presses the button at the door.*

JIM

Oh damn it! Let's make it *three*—
[MARY *comes back into the room.*

JAMES (*softly*)

—Don't you see, Mary, that *that's* the real thing —and the other just a—? (*Her gesture cuts him short. A moment, then:*) May I ask what you intend to do?

MARY

I don't know, yet. I'll have a month to myself to think in. When he comes back, I'll know.

JAMES

Surely you'll say nothing now.

MARY

I'll say nothing now. (*She closes her eyes in pain, and averts her head.*) I'll say less than nothing.

JAMES

—If you're wise, my dear, you'll say nothing ever.
[JULIE *comes in from the hall with a hat and the coat to* MARY'S *dress.*

JULIE

Was it these you rang for, Mrs. Hutton?

MARY

Yes. Thanks, dear. (*She puts on the hat before a mirror.* JULIE *holds the coat for her.*) Tell Therèse just Mr. Hutton's father for lunch, will you?

JULIE

Very well, Miss.

JAMES

I can—

MARY

No—it's all right, really. (*To* JULIE.) I'm going right out to the country from the dock. Telephone Miss Shippan before dinner and tell her I had to go out to-day, on account of the children. Tell her I can't have her this week-end after all. I'll see her here in town Monday or Tuesday. It's the same apartment. The number's on the card there.

JULIE

Yes, Miss.

[JIM *comes in, with a box of flowers.*

JIM

Is the motor here, Julie?

JULIE

Yes, sir.

JIM

Tell Tom to get the bags down, will you?

JULIE

Very well, sir.

JIM

Good-bye, Julie.
[*He shakes her hand.*

JULIE

Good-bye, Mr. Hutton. I hope you'll have a very pleasant trip.

JIM

Thanks.—Look after her well, won't you?

JULIE

As well as ever I can, sir.

JIM

That's the girl. (*To* MARY.) Everything's set, dear. We'd better be on our way.
[*He gives her the box of flowers.*

JAMES (*looking at his watch*)

I think you had.

MARY

What's this?
[*She opens the box.* JULIE *goes out.*

JIM

I sent Therèse to the corner for them.

MARY

That was sweet.

JIM

You can't go to a boat without flowers.—What's the matter, darling?

MARY

Why, nothing. Why?

JIM

You look—are you sure you *want* to come to the dock?

MARY

Yes, I'm quite sure. (*She pins the flowers upon her coat.*) These are sweet. They smell sweet—

JAMES

Don't work too hard, will you, son?

JIM

Not me. It'll probably be pretty tough going in London for awhile. I thought I might run over to Cannes or Antibes for a few days before sailing. That is, if I've time.

MARY (*a breath over the flowers*)

—Awfully sweet. (*A brief pause.*)—I thought you hated the Riviera. You did when we were there.

JIM

That was in season.

MARY

I didn't know you'd ever been there out of season.

JIM

They say it's another place after the crowds go.—Father, would you tell the bank to cable a couple of thou' to my credit in London?

JAMES (*making a note on an envelope*)

Have you got enough now?

JIM

Plenty, thanks.

MARY

Here you are—

[*She sets in* JIM's *buttonhole a flower from her bouquet.*

JIM

Oh thanks, Darling.

JAMES

If you see your Mother, give her my love.

JIM

I'll do that.

JAMES

When is it you're coming back?

JIM

I count on catching the *Mauretania* at Cherbourg. She's due here July ninth.—Good-bye, sir! You're a grand guy.

[*They shake hands.*

JAMES

Thanks, so are you! Hurry, will you? It's twelve-thirty!

JIM (*to* MARY)

Come on, Angel—.

MARY

Here I am.

JIM

Just take Jimmy's hand—(*He holds his hand out to her. She puts her hand in it.*)—and away we go!

MARY

—Away we go.

JIM

Wait a minute.—I must have one good last look.
[*He takes her other hand, faces her about and looks at her She returns his gaze, smiling.*

MARY

Is that all right?

JIM

Father—am I in luck, or am I not?

JAMES

I think you're in great luck, Son.
[*Swiftly,* JIM *bends over and kisses each of the hands in his. Then he tucks one of them through his arm.*

JIM

—And don't I know it! (*To* MARY, *as they go out.*) Listen, Sweet, I've got a great idea—

MARY

What is it, dear?

JIM

—This stupid enforced-holiday—why not make it only four weeks? You could take a fast boat, and we'd have ten days in Paris, and then come back together. No, but seriously I don't see any reason why we shouldn't have at least a week there, and a *little* holiday together after this idiotic month of—

[*His voice has faded out until it is no longer heard.* JAMES *stands alone, looking after them, shaking his head.*

Curtain.

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

Scene: The Music-room, six weeks later. A little after eleven on an early July night.

The windows are opened wide and two of the lamps are lighted. On a small table at back, there is a tray containing a whisky-decanter, a bowl of cracked ice, some bottles of soda and a plate of sandwiches.

At Rise: At the piano, sits MARY *in a day dress of some soft, cool material. Some sheets of the ballet-score are before her. Others are strewn on the top of the piano, with pen and ink nearby. She plays a brief passage twice over, then a buzzer above the door sounds twice. She goes to the door, presses a button beside it several times, opens the door part way, listens intently then goes back to the piano. After a few moments* JAMES HUTTON *enters from the hall.*

MARY

Hello, Father. (*She rises, and goes to him.*) Thanks for coming. (*She kisses him.*) How are you, anyway?

JAMES

Fine, thanks.—*You* look a little white and wan—

MARY

It's the heat.

[*She reseats herself at the piano. He remains standing.*

JAMES

I couldn't get a train till seven.

MARY

I'm terribly glad you didn't wait. (*She plays a few notes. Their talk is somewhat constrained.*) Have you been having fun?

JAMES

I've been lying in the sunshine hours a day, trying to get the neuritis out of my shoulder.

MARY

With results, I hope.—Have a cigarette—

JAMES

Thanks, I've got one.—Superb results.

MARY

I thought when you left we'd soon be reading about a smart suicide on Bailey's Beach.

JAMES

So did I. How are the children?

MARY

Simply thriving. I've concluded I fuss over them too much. The less I'm with them, the better they are. Jimmy was thrilled over those fire-works you sent him for the Fourth. He'd never seen such big ones.

[JAMES *smiles. A pause. Then:*

JAMES

It's quite cool up here.

MARY

The river's a great blessing, and I keep the blinds

closed from noon to sundown. It's the only way. [*There is another and more strained pause.* JAMES *clears his throat.*

JAMES

You've decided you prefer town, then.

MARY

Not exactly—but I've had to be in such a lot. I've been working like mad.

JAMES

Music?

MARY

Yes.

JAMES

Whom have you got here with you—Julie?

MARY

No. She's at Aunt Grace's with Sabina and the babies. She needed a rest. No one's with me.

JAMES

But doesn't the house seem rather large to you?

MARY

I live in this room. It's like an apartment. I've had an electric-arrangement put on the front-door, so that when it buzzes up here I can open it without going down.

JAMES

I'm not sure how safe that is.

MARY

Oh I don't press the button unless I hear the right

signal—two short ones—buzz-buzz—like that. You happened to get it right.

JAMES

You'll have all the postmen in New York in on you.

MARY

I like postmen.

[*Another silence. Then:*

JAMES

I suppose you've heard from Jim.

MARY

There was a radio this morning: "Giant Liner Battered By Storm. Floating Palace Twelve Hours Late. Much Love."'

JAMES

No hope of disembarking passengers before morning, I presume.

MARY

The office said not.—She's not due at Quarantine till midnight.

JAMES

I see.

MARY

I wired back I wouldn't try to meet him, and to come right here.—About breakfast-time, I expect.

JAMES (*at length*)

Well, Mary—?

MARY

Have a whisky-and-soda, won't you?

JAMES

Shall I need it?

[MARY *laughs shortly.*

MARY

You can't tell!

[JAMES *looks at her closely, but does not move.*

JAMES

I'm sorry I didn't get your message till so late.

MARY

I didn't know about your fishing-trip.

JAMES

Anyhow, I came running back, didn't I?

MARY

You were sweet.

[*A brief pause. Then:*

JAMES

Your note was not. (*Another pause.*) *Well,* Mary—?

[MARY *hesitates. Then:*

MARY

I promised to let you know as soon as I did.

JAMES

Yes.

MARY

After Jim left I hoped for awhile that I'd been mistaken about—about Noel and him. I've found out since that I was not. I've found it out definitely.

JAMES

From Jim?

MARY

Oh no!

JAMES

—But you've written him? What have you said?

MARY

I've said nothing. You know, and I know. No one else. I shall tell him as soon as he comes in, in the morning.

JAMES

To-morrow is the tenth, Mary.

MARY

I'm—aware of that—

JAMES

An anniversary, isn't it?

MARY

—Six years is six years. I suppose, as things go, we've done rather well.

JAMES

Don't talk like that. Talk of that sort doesn't belong to you.

[MARY *shrugs.*

MARY

Average, anyway.—What *is* the average, do you know? Less than six, or more?

JAMES

Stop it, Mary.

MARY

I'm sorry. I'm only speaking as I feel.

JAMES

You're actually going to leave Jim?

MARY

Yes.

JAMES

But only temporarily—not a real separation—

MARY

I'm going to divorce him, Father.

[JAMES *stares at her for a moment, incredulously. With deliberation, she begins to play a passage from the ballet. He goes to the table and makes himself a drink. He turns to her with it in his hand. She stops playing, rises, and meets his gaze steadily. He shakes his head.*

JAMES

Mary, Mary—

MARY

It's too bad, I know. But you see it's all gone, now.

[*Now she is standing against the piano, facing him.*

JAMES

What is? Your love for him?

MARY

I don't know about that. I can't tell about that, yet awhile. But my life with him—that's gone, all right.

JAMES

Only if you let it go.

MARY

I'm afraid I'm not much good at hanging on to

things, once they've begun to slip from me. I'm afraid I don't want them much, after that.

JAMES

What a fine, deep love it must have been, eh? (*She looks at him. He explains:*) To chuck the whole thing overboard so lightly, so easily.

MARY

I haven't had much ease these last weeks, Father. And I don't feel light, precisely. But if I mean no more to him than that—

JAMES

—Than what?

MARY

—If his love for me wasn't strong enough to—

JAMES

Listen to me, Mary: if you're going to quit Jim, quit him. But in heaven's name don't let it do this to you.

MARY

—Do what to me?

JAMES

—Fog your intellect, fog your reason—make an honest, fearless, first-rate woman into a softy.

MARY

I beg your pardon?

JAMES

"If I mean no more to him—"—"If his love for me wasn't strong enough—" Really, for you, of all people, to talk that kind of second-rate trash, is about the limit.

MARY

That's going it pretty stiff, don't you think?

JAMES

Yes, I do. And I'm amazed to think you need it.—What on earth has one misstep of Jim's to do with you?

MARY

It has a great deal to do with me.

JAMES

Nonsense!—If your hatred of the Farley girl, or your jealousy of Jim is stronger than anything else you feel, all right. But this sense of grievance—personal injury—good heavens, what can Noel Farley do to *you?* If Jim has been anything to her—*he* may lose by it, but what *you* lose, I can't see.

MARY

I neither hate Noel nor am I jealous of Jim nor do I feel that I've been injured. But I've lost about everything I had, I think.

JAMES

How so?

MARY

Jim belonged to me. Jim was all my own.

JAMES

Don't glory in your sense of possession, Mary. It's the lowest instinct you've got.

MARY

I'm glorying in very little, now. It's—rather awful to know you're not loved. You miss it terribly.

JAMES

Jim loves you as he always has. I'm as sure of that as I am of my name.

MARY

In any event, I don't feel called upon to share him.

JAMES

I doubt if you've shared anything. If you have, it's the least important element in your whole relationship.

MARY

It seems not to be.

JAMES

I don't mean to belittle sex. It holds a high and dishonored place among other forms of intoxication. But love is something else again, and marriage is still another thing—

MARY (*bitterly*)

Yes, and a great thing, isn't it?—Man's most divine conception—pure poetry—religion—sacrament—

JAMES

By heaven, it ought to be!

MARY

I was rather for it myself, if you'll remember. It was church to me, all right. But now, you see, I'm left with all the candles out, and rosy windows smashed and rotten ragtime playing through my church, where there was nothing but plain chant and Palestrina all the whole day long. I think I *have* lost something—

JAMES

Come here, Mary—
[*She goes to him and stands with her head against his shoulder.*

MARY

It's gone, Father. It's gone, it's gone—

JAMES

Only if you let it. Think, child!—Why, you used to say that nothing—
[MARY *raises her head.*

MARY

Yes, I know: theories are fine, before things happen. But once they have, you find you don't think straight, if you're a woman. You can't—you only feel straight.

JAMES

You've had a bad shock, Mary. You've been jolted back into a state of mind you outgrew years ago. These straight feelings you talk of are twisted every which way by all the rubbish about love and marriage they taught you before you learned to think. They're a lot of old words and phrases, that's all.—"Trust betrayed," "deception," "infidelity."—Watch out for them.

MARY

He went from me to her. He chose her over me.

JAMES

There's no choosing to it. You ought to know that physical attraction isn't limited to one man or one woman. It never has been and never will be.

MARY

It must have been more than that.

JAMES

All right, capacity for love, then.

MARY

This isn't just any case of man—wife—mistress, Father. Mistresses are a different kind of person, as a rule. I can understand that sort of compromise, hateful as it would be. But Noel is a person like myself. I've known her all my life.

JAMES

Noel's no more like you than I'm like Lincoln. Mistresses are *always* a different kind of person, Mary, and so are lovers.—Will you tell me something?

MARY

Anything you like.

JAMES

When Jim came back a year ago, did you sense any change in him?

MARY (*after a moment*)

No. (*Then suddenly.*)—If only he had told me! If only he had been honest! It's so—insulting—

JAMES

Jim is as honest as the day is long: you know that. The fact that he *didn't* tell you—the fact that you felt nothing in your bones, as you say—isn't that evidence enough for you that in his eyes it encroached in no way upon your province?

MARY

—And what about *my* eyes!?

JAMES

Oh Mary, I wish you might be twenty years older for one moment.

MARY

I should see it the same.
[*There is a silence. Then:*

JAMES

—So you've convinced yourself there's only one thing to do.

MARY

I've tried to convince myself there wasn't.

JAMES

—Paris, with the rest of the defeated sisterhood—ten thousand dollars in hand for some wretched lawyer to bribe mean little French officials with—*you*, Mary—

MARY

—If that's the way it's done. How else?

JAMES

Are you asking me? (*She gestures, lifelessly.*) Then I say not only put divorce completely out of your head but never by so much as one word let him know what you know. Refuse to admit it, Mary. Refuse, even to yourself, to admit it. Above all, don't speak of it. If there's one destructive thing in this world, it's words—spoken—

MARY

I shall tell him the first moment that I see him.
[*A moment. Then:*

JAMES

—Well, it's quite beyond me. I counted on great things for you and Jim. When I stood there beside that boy in that hot little country church six years ago, and saw you coming up to him, I can't tell you what I felt about you both. It seemed to me that you had everything: strength, beauty, youth and wisdom—minds as open as any ever I've encountered—enormous gaiety—a great joy in each other, and in life. Such a wedding-garment as you two brought to your marriage, I've never known.

MARY

Well, it's in rags now, all right.

JAMES

And why?—If you and Jim had spent the last five years at each other's throats, that would be one thing. Actual, hopeless incompatibility I can understand. Drunkenness—cruelty—insanity—. But this, *this*—

MARY

—About the best reason there is, I think.

JAMES

Mary, it wasn't three months ago that all of you came to me for Easter. Jim arrived late. You hadn't seen him in three days—three whole days. I heard your voices from the next room. You chattered on about nothing until morning. You laughed a great

deal. It was great music, Mary. There was more love in it than in all the sighs and picked-up roses in this world.

MARY

It's no use, Father.

JAMES

No?—Then all that's left for me to say is that a most uncommon marriage is about to go to smash because a once wise woman has become vain and selfish, because a good, hard mind has nicked its edge off on as rotten and false a conception as ever yet existed. You're going to quit Jim because he had "relations," as they say, with another woman—well, suppose he did, what of it? How big a part does that play in *your* life? Do you describe your marriage in those terms alone? I'm appalled you set so slight a value on yourself. I'm appalled that you accept defeat so easily, and on such a count.

MARY

I hoped you would understand me. Evidently you don't. If ours had been just any ordinary, halfway-happy marriage, perhaps it might survive this. But it was so perfect for so long, it can't. It goes from all to nothing.

JAMES

—Talk. (*She confronts him angrily.*) Yes! Everything you've told me to-night confirms my first suspicion: that it's the physical fact alone you can't escape. All you've said has been just one repeated statement that to you the most important thing in

your whole marriage has been your physical relation to your husband.

MARY

—You think so!

JAMES

—Over and over you've said it. And now, because you insist on a monopoly of that particular thing, and find you haven't it, you take the lowest possible advantage of your ample means to indulge yourself in a luxury the lucky poor cannot afford. Bid up vanity! Bid up revenge! (*The buzzer sounds twice.*)—Well, do it, and you're a failure, Mary—a complete failure —not only in your marriage—but in every last department of your life.

MARY

That's enough, I think.

JAMES

I am ashamed of you. I cannot believe—

MARY

—*Quite* enough.

[*He looks at her intently. There is a silence. Then he bows slightly.*

JAMES

Very well. Good-night, my dear.

MARY

Good-night.

[*A brief pause, then:*

JAMES (*a last appeal*)

Mary—

MARY

—Good-night.

[*The buzzer sounds again. He turns and goes out, stopping at the doorway long enough to press the electric button in response to the buzzer.* MARY *stands for a moment, rigid, then goes to the piano. Her fingers follow the ballet-score, but soundlessly.* RICHARD *enters.*

RICHARD

H'lo.

MARY

Where are the Copes?

RICHARD

How should I know? (*He goes to the window.*)—Hot. Oh my God, how hot—(*He looks out.*) Look at that river to-night, will you—

MARY

I have been.

RICHARD

If ever I get any money, I'm going to buy a small tug and paint her up and live on her.

MARY

That's a divine idea. Let me make the curtains.

RICHARD

I think I'll go on a boat-trip myself to-morrow.

MARY

Oh? Where to?

[*He returns from the window.*

RICHARD

Quite a way. (*He throws himself into a chair and sits with his head back, his eyes closed.*) It's wonderful to be able to breathe again.

MARY

Have you had dinner?

RICHARD

Of course I've had dinner. What do you think I live on? Air?

MARY

You've been known to, at times.—How much have you had to drink?

RICHARD (*starting forward*)

I've had nothing to drink!

MARY

—Then make yourself a whisky-and-soda, won't you? There are the things—

[RICHARD *stares at the tray, then slumps back again into his chair.*

RICHARD

Later, maybe.

[MARY *looks at him curiously, then:*

MARY

What's the matter, my dear?

RICHARD

Don't say "my dear" to me. Don't say anything to me. Just let me sit here a minute, and then I'll go.

[*There is a long silence.* MARY *rises, picks up a sheet of the ballet-score and frowns over it.*

MARY

—I wanted to ask you: this bit before the policemen come on in the last scene—it sounds to me like—

RICHARD

Oh don't talk about the ballet! Let the ballet alone.

MARY

But it isn't finished!

RICHARD

Let it stay where it is. It's as far as it'll get.

[*A pause. Then:*

MARY (*quietly*)

—And precisely what does that mean, may I ask?

RICHARD

Try thinking it out. That helps sometimes.

MARY (*chilling*)

I'm afraid it's a little deep for me.

RICHARD

I'm sorry, if it is. You can console yourself it's deeper still for me.

[*There is an ominous silence. Finally:*

MARY

—After all these weeks, and all the work we've done together—you won't put in one good half-hour more and finish it? You actually mean that?

RICHARD

Actually I do.

MARY

—One half-hour.

RICHARD

Who says it'd be only that?

MARY

It needn't be more. Not if it comes.

RICHARD

Well, it won't come.

MARY

How do you know?

RICHARD

I know. (*Suddenly he bursts out:*) What the devil does it matter, anyway? It hasn't a snowball's chance. It never had.

MARY

—So you quit on it.

RICHARD

Sure.

MARY

What do you suppose it means to me? Nothing?
[*He shrugs.*

RICHARD

Oh—agreeable occupation gone—pleasant diversion —you'll find something else.
[*A silence. Then:*

MARY (*in a small voice*)

—Would you mind going now, please? (*He turns to her quickly. Her voice rises.*) Will you please go?
[*He makes a quick movement toward her, then stops, and murmurs:*

RICHARD

All right.

MARY (*with intense feeling*)

Richard, how can you do it!?

RICHARD

—How *can't* I do it, you mean.

MARY

Well?

RICHARD

Mary—listen, dear—

MARY (*impatiently*)

What? *What?*

RICHARD

—Jim—his boat's late, isn't it?

MARY

Yes, why?

RICHARD

I've got to talk to you.

MARY

Then go ahead and talk.

RICHARD

—Talk for a long time—to-night—

MARY

I don't see how it's to be arranged, do you?

RICHARD

It can be.

MARY

Peter and Nora are coming. They ought to be here now.

RICHARD

Don't answer when they ring.

MARY (*directly*)

But I must.

RICHARD

Why?

MARY

I must.

RICHARD

What is it you're afraid of, Mary?

MARY (*frowning*)

—Afraid of?

RICHARD

Yes.

[*She looks at him steadily for a momcnt. Then:*

MARY

Good-bye, Richard. (*He does not answer. She concludes, contemptuously*) And sometime, if you can manage it, I wish you'd finish *something.*

RICHARD (*softly*)

Oh damn you—

MARY (*in a burst*)

—And damn you! Go and tune pianos, that's where *you* belong! A fine artist *you* are—lazy, dabbling, worthless—

[*He seizes her by the shoulders. She stops. They gaze at each other, tense, furious. At last he speaks.*

RICHARD

I can't finish that ballet, because that ballet's you and me, and we aren't finished and never shall be. So *it* won't.

MARY (*after a moment, comprehending*)

You can let go my shoulders now.

RICHARD

I won't, though.

MARY

What's it all about, Richard?

RICHARD

I love you, Mary.

MARY

I think you love music, my dear.

RICHARD

You and it—you're one to me.

MARY

Thanks. That's very sweet.

RICHARD

Oh, don't talk like such a fool.

MARY

I don't know what to say to you. What do you want me to say?

RICHARD

Something I'll—Anything you want to.

MARY

—I like you very much—so much, so much. And I shall miss you horribly.

RICHARD

We've been together all the time for weeks—so will I you.

MARY

I shan't know what to do with myself.

RICHARD

But you'll find something, won't you?

MARY

I'll try awfully hard.

RICHARD

Oh, don't you feel a thing for me—not anything at all?

[*She looks at him, a little startled.*

MARY

I never thought—

[*A moment, then:*

RICHARD

I think you do, Mary.

MARY

—Do you suppose?

RICHARD

Yes.—Don't *you?*

[*She moves away from him.*

MARY

—It would be very funny if I did.

RICHARD

—And would you laugh a great deal?

MARY

I think I'd cry my eyes out.

RICHARD

Then never mind.

[*She turns to him again, swiftly.*

MARY

Oh, you dear person, you—

RICHARD

Mary—come here to me a moment—

MARY

I can't.

RICHARD

—You don't want to—

MARY (*lowly*)

I—didn't say that—

RICHARD

Then why—?

MARY

I don't know. It just seems to me I can't.

RICHARD (*after a moment*)

All right.—Good-bye. Thanks ever so much for—ever so many things.

MARY

Oh, *don't* say that! It's I, who—

RICHARD (*an estimate, without self-pity:*)

I expect when you take me all in all, I'm just a bum.

MARY

You're a pretty important bum, I think. To me you are, anyhow.

RICHARD

That'll do nicely. Good-bye—(*He holds out both his hands to her, smiling. She hesitates one instant, then moves directly into his arms, and kisses him. The breath leaves his body in a gasp. His arms tighten about her. She is rigid for a moment, then something within her gives way and she slumps against his breast, her face averted.*) Look up at me!

MARY

No, no—

RICHARD

Look up!

MARY

No—(*She makes a half-movement to leave him, but cannot. She lifts her face to his. They kiss. Again she averts her head, with a choked cry.*) Richard—!

RICHARD

I love you so terribly.

MARY

You—(*She cannot finish. A moment. Then:*) Oh, this isn't me! It can't be—

RICHARD

It *is* you!

MARY

No, no.

RICHARD

For the first time, it's you.

MARY

It's—just something raging inside me. It isn't me—it isn't—

RICHARD

It's *my* you.—It's the you *I* know.
[*She shakes her head.*

MARY

Go quickly—dear Richard—go quickly—

RICHARD

I'm going to stay here with you.

MARY

You're—? But that's—that's not possible. You must go at once.

RICHARD

Oh Mary—

MARY

Please go, please go:—Peter and Nora—they'll be coming.

RICHARD

—When they ring, let them ring. Don't answer.

MARY

I must.

RICHARD

No.—You were tired waiting, weren't you, Mary?

MARY

—Was I?—I don't know.

RICHARD

—Don't say anything for a moment. Just stay close to me. Don't speak. (*A long silence. She remains in his arms. At last he speaks, very slowly.*) I can feel your heart beating. It wouldn't beat like that. [*With a faint cry she strains against him. Another silence. Then:*

MARY

It isn't mine.

RICHARD

It is—and you want me, too—don't you, don't you, Mary?

MARY

—Impossible—it's not possible—

RICHARD

—*Don't* you, Mary? (*She does not answer, but her arms tighten around him.*)—Then where's the difference? Where is it, dear?

MARY

There *is* one. There's a great one.

RICHARD

I don't see it—

MARY

You've got to go—oh, *go*, will you?

RICHARD

—You think it will be just the beginning of something. It won't. It'll be the end. You're always saying things must be finished. So must this, Mary. It must be finished, Sweet, really it must, or we'll haunt each other our whole lives long. We'd never get away from it then, never, never. Oh, why won't you see that, Mary?

MARY

I can't. All I can see is that I'd hate the thought of you, of both of us.

RICHARD

No!

MARY

Yes.—It would—simply blast everything in my whole life. (*She leaves him.*)—Oh, how is it I can love him so, and still feel this for you? I don't understand it.

RICHARD (*following her*)

—But we aren't three people—you and he and I. We're four people: you and he, and you and I. *His* you can't ever in this world be mine, any more than my you can be his.

MARY

—I don't understand it—

RICHARD

It has nothing to do with anyone or anything but us and our life. Don't you know that, Mary?

MARY (*dully*)

Hasn't it, Richard?

RICHARD

I promise you!

MARY (*almost inaudibly*)

Do you, Richard—

RICHARD

It won't be taking anything from anyone. You have enough love in you to give me—you keep making it, making it all the time—love and more love.

MARY

—I don't understand this, I don't understand it.

RICHARD

But it's our life, Mary, it really is—there's no one else in it but you and me—there's no one could come into it. Haven't you always said—?

MARY

I've said a lot of things.

RICHARD

Well, there's no need to say anything anymore. Just stay close to me—

[*Once more she is in his arms.*

MARY

No—keep talking—keep on talking—(*He shakes his head, silently. She cries:*) You must! Talk! Talk! Will you *talk?!*

[*Again he shakes his head. There is a silence, finally broken by two sharp rings from the buzzer. She stirs in his arms.*

RICHARD

Let it ring.

[*She is quiet once more. The buzzer sounds again.*

MARY

Oh—floods are breaking all in and around us, and you won't even help me up out of them.

RICHARD

No.

[*The buzzer sounds again, long, insistent. He holds her closer to him. The buzzer stops. She speaks again, this time with despair in her voice.*

MARY

I shouldn't think you'd want me this way. It won't be me at all—it will be—just *any* woman (*A moment. He raises his head slowly, holds her off from him and looks at her intently. Her face is contorted, her eyes imploring.*)—That's true, you know. It *is* true!

[*There are two short and final signals from the buzzer. He turns his head abruptly away from her and stares at the door. Then, in a swift movement, he leaves her, goes to the door and presses the button beside it. With an exclamation, she covers her face. He goes to the piano and seats himself. Then:*

RICHARD

In a few minutes I'll go, Mary. I'll walk down the stairs and out and up along the river to Eighty-ninth Street. I'll sit there on a bench for one half-hour. That's about what they'll stay. Then I'll come back.

MARY

Don't come back.—If you do love me, don't—

[RICHARD *begins to play the piano aimlessly.*

RICHARD

—I'll come back. By then you'll have had time to think, and you can let me in or not, as you like. Before you do, look in the glass at your face and see that it *is* you—*my* you. Then, if you want me, I'll be here.—Is that fair?

MARY

I—suppose so.

RICHARD (*playing*)

All right.—Now go to the top of the stairs and call down to them. They're coming up. (MARY *manages to light a cigarette.*) That's it.

MARY (*with difficulty*)

Richard—anyhow—I want to tell you: I think you are—

RICHARD

There aren't any anyhows yet, my dear. (*He jerks his head in the direction of the door.*) Go ahead—

[MARY *goes to the door, opens it and calls:*

MARY

Hello there!

RICHARD

Good girl.

[NORA'S *voice is heard in protest from below.*

NORA

Well!

MARY

Oh, I can't stand their chatter now! I simply can't.

RICHARD

You've damn well got to.

MARY

Keep playing, won't you?

RICHARD

Sure.

[MARY *goes to a mirror and hastily brushes back her hair and dabs powder upon her face.* NORA *enters.* RICHARD'S *playing becomes louder.*

MARY

Nora!—How are you?

NORA

We couldn't be worse. We've been ringing ten minutes. What on earth's been the matter?

MARY

You can't hear anything up here, with the piano going.

FANNY (*entering*)

—Then throw the piano out. We're important people. (*She throws herself into a chair.*) Whew!—Hello, Parish—

RICHARD

Hello, Shippan.—How was the show?

NORA (*fanning herself with a handkerchief*)

Not bad.

RICHARD

Sorry I couldn't—

FANNY

I never cracked a smile.

RICHARD

—make it.

[PETER *comes puffing in. He and* FANNY *and* NORA *are in evening clothes.*

PETER

Fanny, why are you so tight with your money? Why don't you give these people an elevator? (*He mops his brow.*)—It's a little bit of heaven, and they call it a top-floor. (*He turns pompously to* MARY.) However do you do, my dear?

MARY

All hot and happy, thanks.

[*He turns to* RICHARD.

PETER

Evenin', Massa Parish.

RICHARD (*playing*)

Hello.

[*All the voices are pitched high, against the music.*

MARY (*to* FANNY)

I nearly gave you up. Where have you been?

FANNY

In a cellar on Forty-ninth Street, drinking white wine and seltzer.

PETER (*moving toward the whisky*)

—The seltzer was good.

[*He pours himself a drink.*

NORA

Peter won his case against old man Burke this morning.

MARY

You didn't!

NORA

Isn't he bright?

PETER

—I'm glad I did it. He was a beast.

MARY

But no wonder you're celebrating!

PETER

Celebrating? Me? Don't be silly.
[*He stirs the ice noisily in his glass.*

NORA

Peter, will you kindly stop that eternal clash, clash, clash!

FANNY

Poor lamb, it's her old wound again.

NORA (*fanning herself*)

I'll die.

FANNY

Not in the house, darling.

PETER

—In the open air, seeking water. (*He raises his glass.*)—*Whisky* and water.

NORA

Don't speak of it.

MARY

Don't speak of what?—That doesn't make sense.

NORA

What does? Can you tell me?

[RICHARD *rises from the piano, takes off his coat and throws it across the bench beside him.*

PETER

—Now there's a good idea.

NORA (*irritably*)

What? What?

PETER

—Of Parish's. He cast his coat aside like an old coat.

[RICHARD *reseats himself and continues playing but at lower pitch.*

NORA

We're moving on in one minute, so don't *you* start undressing. (*To* MARY.)—We thought we'd go and dance somewhere.

[MARY *does not answer.*

FANNY

Are you coming?

[*Still* MARY *hears nothing but* RICHARD'S *music. A moment, then:*

NORA

Whoo-hoo! Mary! (MARY *turns to her.*)—Are you listening, darling?

MARY

Of course I am. (*To* FANNY.) What, darling?

FANNY

Come along with us to hell and Rector's, will you?

MARY

Well I should say not.

NORA

Why not?

MARY (*absently; still listening to* RICHARD)

It's too hot, and I want some sleep.

FANNY (*to* NORA)

—So she'll look her prettiest when the great big steamboat brings Daddy home to-morrow.

MARY (*smiling*)

Yes. That's it.

[NORA *and* FANNY *are on the sofa.* MARY *stands near the piano, thinking.* PETER *paces, with his whisky.*

PETER

What news of the lad?—Any news is good news.

MARY

He lands at about nine in the morning.

PETER

I can't stay up that long. It's impossible.

NORA (*to* FANNY, *watching* MARY)

It'll be good to have Jim back, won't it?—If only to get Mary out of her doldrums.

FANNY

"Doldrums"—there's a funny word. It sounds quite lewd.

NORA

But have you seen Mary much lately?

FANNY

My dear, she sees no one.

NORA

Is she ill, do you think?

FANNY

It were better if she were.

NORA

Not having an affair with someone!

FANNY

Mary? Oh no!

NORA

What is it, then?

FANNY

They say in Poictesme that she loves her husband.

PETER

Will the gray hordes never cease? God! Are we too late?

FANNY

Six weeks without him is just too much to bear, it's too much to bear.

NORA

Never mind. To-morrow we'll have our old Mary back again.

PETER

She had charm, that girl. Always a smile for everyone.

FANNY

And now it's a curse or a blow.

PETER

Love is like that.

MARY

What is it you're playing, Richard?

RICHARD

Listen—

[FANNY *and* NORA *look at each other.*

FANNY

I—uh—I do hope we're not intruding.

MARY

Don't be silly.

PETER

Watch out, Parish, or the young master will thrash you roundly.

RICHARD

Yes?

NORA (*suddenly*)

Mary, if you don't give that party to-morrow, I'm off you for life.

FANNY

So am I.

MARY

What party is that?

FANNY

Listen to it! "What party!"

NORA

You aren't actually going to let an anniversary pass without a celebration?

PETER

Say it ain't so, Mary.

NORA

I suppose they'll just dine alone together. That's what she really wants.

FANNY

Don't. My heart's breaking.

MARY

I want nothing of the sort. It's simply that I haven't any servants in town.

NORA

Why not get them in?

PETER

—The railroad, or steam-demon, as it was then called, was invented by Martin Luther in 1821. Since then—

FANNY

I'll lend you a butler with whiskers, if you like.—Or I tell you what! *I'll* give the party!

MARY

No you won't, darling.

FANNY (*to* NORA)

What can you do with her?

RICHARD

Listening, Mary?

MARY

Yes.

[FANNY *looks from one to the other.*

FANNY

Would you mind telling me what goes on here?

NORA (*bursting out*)

—Well, *I* think it's a crime! You could get every single one that was in the wedding.

PETER

I saw Johnny Scott downtown this very noon. "Hello, Johnny," said I. "How are you, Peter?" said he—

NORA

—All except Noel, anyway.

PETER

—Then we went and had a drink.

FANNY

—Noel, too. She's staying with the Potters. I saw it in the Times.

[*A brief pause. Then:*

MARY

Oh, she's back, then—

FANNY

She must be.

PETER (*reflectively*)

—Noel Farley—I can see her now—

NORA

Can you? I never could.

PETER

Where's she been all the time?

FANNY

—Living somewhere in a little house-by-the-sea, with only her pets for companions.

PETER

Noel? Like hell she has. (*An afterthought:*) *What* pets?

NORA

Mary, it does seem such a shame. You and Jim can dine alone together for the rest of your lives.

FANNY

—And probably will.—What *I* always say is, one should share one's happiness with one's friends. It makes for better feeling.

MARY

I'm sorry, but I can't face a party.

PETER (*wistfully*)

I've got a dandy new bird-call to do with the soup: it's the yellow-bellied wagtail.

MARY

You're all terribly kind, but I simply can't face it. [*There is a pause.*

PETER

Well that, I should say, is that.

MARY

I'm sorry, but I'm afraid it is.

NORA (*bursting out once more*)

Honestly, if you aren't acting queerer than anyone I've ever known—

MARY

I'm sorry, Nora.

[FANNY *looks significantly from* MARY *to* RICHARD.

FANNY (*to* PETER *and* NORA)

What do you think?—Perhaps we'd better just tiptoe quietly out.

[*Suddenly* MARY *breaks:*

MARY

Fanny, will you *kindly* stop talking like such a fool!

FANNY

Why, you saucy puss. (*She stares at her for a moment, then rises and turns to* NORA.) Come on, will you? I can't stand much more of this.

NORA

Wait a minute. (*To* MARY) Now look here, darling, I—(*The buzzer sounds once.* MARY *starts in surprise.* RICHARD *stops playing and listens.*)—Who is it you're expecting?

MARY (*rising*)

Why—no one—

RICHARD

A telegram, most likely.

[MARY *goes to the door.*

FANNY

I'm going.

MARY

Please wait. I don't know who it is. (*She presses the button and opens the hall door, then turns to* FANNY.) I'm sorry, Fanny—I didn't mean to be rude.

FANNY

Oh, that's all right.

[MARY *presses her fingers against her temples.*

MARY

It's just so damned hot.

PETER (*cheerfully*)

Sure it is!—That's what it is: hot.

[RICHARD *is staring at the hall doorway.*

FANNY

—All I want to know is, can we expect some little change after to-morrow.—In you, I mean.

[MARY *looks at her curiously, then laughs shortly. A brief pause. Then:*

MARY

Fanny, after to-morrow you can expect a big change. I promise you you can.

[NORA *has gone to the hall doorway, where she stands listening.*

FANNY

That's all right, then. Mummy understands.

NORA

—Do you want him to come up, whoever it is? Because he's coming.

MARY

—If it's a tel—

[NORA'S *sudden cry cuts her short:*

NORA

Jim!

[*Steps are heard bounding up the stairs.* MARY *stands frozen against the wall by the door.* RICHARD'S *head bends lower over the piano and his hands drop once more upon the keys, which he fingers without sound.* JIM *enters past* MARY.

JIM

Where's Mary? For the love of—! (*He turns and sees her, catches his breath in joy, and says:*) Hello, Mary.

MARY

Hello, Jim.

[*In an instant he is at her side, and has taken her into his arms.*

NORA (*after a moment*)

Well, if it isn't little friendly-face home again.

[JIM *looks over* MARY'S *shoulder at them.*

PETER

You low cad. You come here with your fine clothes and your city manner, and—

JIM

Hello, Copes!

NORA

It's nice you're back.

FANNY (*pushing into view*)

—And this is that attractive Shippan girl.

JIM

Fanny! How are you?

FANNY (*archly*)

Need you ask, dear?

[JIM *laughs.*

PETER

—All de Eighty-foist Streets togedder again—ain't it grand?

JIM

Oh Lord, if it's not!—Hello, Parish!

[MARY *leaves his arms.*

RICHARD

—Good trip?

JIM

Terrible. The day before yesterday up came a monsoon or something and nearly blew us out of the water.

FANNY

You just can't tell about ole davvil Sea.

JIM (*to* MARY)

How are the babies?

MARY

They said you wouldn't land until morning.—They're simply blooming.

PETER

How'd you work it, Jim?

JIM

—Bribery and corruption. I came in on the mail-boat.

PETER

Just Hutton grit, that's all.

JIM

—And I wasn't above bringing some champagne with me, either.

PETER

—But that's against the law. It's against every decent—where is it?

JIM

No you don't! It's for to-morrow night, to drink the bride's health in—isn't it, Mary?

[MARY *smiles, but does not answer. There is a brief pause.*

NORA

Oh, is there to be a party?

JIM

Of course there's to be a party!

FANNY

Thank God, the militia.

JIM

—And you're all invited.—How about you, Parish? Can you come, too?

RICHARD

I'm sorry. I won't be here.

JIM

Oh? Are you off somewhere?

RICHARD

Yes. I'm going boating.

FANNY

Where? Central Park?

RICHARD

No. Farther.

MARY

What's all this, Richard?

RICHARD

I know the purser on one of the United Fruit Boats. He says he can get me on board as one of the loading-crew. Six in the morning at the Battery. Sail at seven.

FANNY

Just like that!

PETER

Jim—(JIM *looks at him.* PETER'S *gesture includes* MARY *and* RICHARD.)—That's your luck, son.

[JIM *looks incredulous for a moment, then lights a cigarette, watching* RICHARD.

MARY

When did you decide this, Richard?

[*He shrugs.*

RICHARD

To-night.

NORA

Is it to be a long trip?

RICHARD

Not terribly: four or five months.

PETER

I knew a fellow did that once. It was years afterwards before he could even take orange-juice.

JIM (*casually*)

—But how about this ballad you and Mary have been writing—

FANNY

—Ballet, idiot.

JIM

Well, ballet, then.—Is it finished?

RICHARD

I've just been playing the end of it. (*He rises and goes to* MARY.) I'll bat it out on paper to-night and send it to you in the morning, Mary.

MARY

That would be perfect.

RICHARD

—When the police finally follow Mike and the girl across the roof of the apartment and they go over the edge, and they look down after them, do you know what they find below in the courtyard?

MARY

You—hadn't decided.

RICHARD

I have now: two bodies.

MARY (*lowly*)

I see.

[*There is a silence. Finally:*

JIM (*lightly*)

I should think—

FANNY (*simultaneously*)

You know, they've been on a regular musical orgy, these two.

RICHARD (*to* JIM)

It's a nice practical little ballet. It wouldn't cost more than a hundred thousand or so to put on.

JIM

Well, good luck with it, anyhow.

RICHARD

Thanks. I've had that already. (*To* PETER, FANNY *and* NORA.) Good-bye.

NORA

Good-bye. Come to see us when you get back.

FANNY

Good-bye. I think you're sweet.

PETER

Good-bye. They say the bananas are the worst.

RICHARD

I'll watch out for them.—Good-bye, Hutton.

JIM

Good-bye, Richard. (*They shake hands.*) Have a good trip.

RICHARD

Thanks, Jim. Good-bye, Mary—

[MARY *gives him her hand.*

MARY

Write to me, won't you?

RICHARD

Sure! (*He bends toward her. She lifts her face to his. He kisses her.*) Good-bye—
[*He is gone. There is a silence.*

FANNY

Was that fresh, or wasn't it?

MARY

No, Fanny. It was not.

PETER

I've got no technique for that fellow. He makes me feel about as appropriate as a French soldier sitting at a soda-fountain singing Boola-Boola.

NORA

Mary would say that it's because he's an artist and you're not.

PETER

Well, maybe she'd be right.—Anyone have a sandwich?
[*He takes one.*

JIM

Mary, how long are these confounded people going to hang around here?

MARY

They're hopeless.

PETER

I know a hint when I hear one. Come, Nora—

[NORA *and* FANNY *rise.*

JIM

We'll see you all to-morrow, sure.

NORA

Mary said there wasn't to be any party.

JIM (*frowning*)

But I thought it was all—

MARY

I don't want a party, Jim.

FANNY

I know, but we do.

PETER (*to* MARY)

Who are *you*, anyway? Just a guest in your own house.

JIM

Really don't you, Mary? (MARY *shakes her head.* JIM *turns to the others.*) Then there's no party—

PETER

—Telephone us in the morning—a good night's sleep will do you both good. You're tired, Hutton. You have never learned to spare yourself. Remember, mens sana in corpore sano.

[JIM *laughs uncertainly.*

JIM

Get out!

NORA

Good-night! (*To* MARY.) It's great he's back.

MARY

Isn't it?

[PETER, FANNY *and* NORA *move toward the hall.*

NORA

Don't bother to come down with us.

JIM

We wouldn't think of it.

[NORA *goes out,* FANNY *follows her, calling back:*

FANNY

Thanks for the spinach!

PETER (*following* FANNY)

But my dear—it wasn't here you got the spinach.

[*They are gone.* MARY *stands leaning against the piano, fortifying herself against the ordeal to come: she must tell* JIM *that she knows about* NOEL—*but then what, then what?* JIM *re-enters, uncertainty still upon him: what had* PETER *meant when he said of* RICHARD'S *departure "That's your luck, Son?" What had that whole curious situation he came in on—what had that meant?*

JIM

Well, darling—?

MARY

Jim—

JIM

What is it, dear—

MARY

I've got something I—want to talk to you about. [JIM *looks at her: But it's not possible! Mary? Richard?*

JIM

I'm not certain I want to hear it.

MARY

But it's—it's—

JIM

I'm certain I don't want to hear it!—Come and sit beside me—(*He takes her hand and leads her to the sofa.*) How's father? Have you seen him?

MARY

Yes. He's all right. Jim—

JIM

You look a little white—

MARY (*slowly*)

I've had to be in town a great deal—(*Then, in sudden determination.*) Listen to me Jim! I—

JIM (*as suddenly*)

—I'm terribly glad you had that music-thing to work on. I think it's rotten not to be busy, when—. Oh, I saw Mother—I went down for the week-end. She's all right, but how she endures that man White, I don't know.

MARY

Is he awful?

JIM

He's such a damn bore. And he's forever taking care of himself. If she had to quit Father, I'd rather she'd married the black sheep of the Jukes family, I swear I would. (MARY *laughs.*) Did you get the roof fixed?

MARY

Jim, it's too perfect.

JIM

I thought you planned to have the party there.

MARY

I did, originally.

[*A pause.*

JIM

How has Sabina been?

MARY

Angelic.

JIM

Did Collins straighten out all right?

MARY

No. He left and took the grass-cutter with him. But I've got a more reliable one now.

JIM

Grass-cutter?

[MARY *laughs.*

MARY

No, Stupid. Gardener.

JIM

Business went marvellously.

MARY

I don't care.

JIM (*smiling*)

I know you don't.

MARY

Did you get down to Cannes at all?

JIM

I hadn't time. Oh listen—all the presents, yours and the children's too—they're in my bag—I'll have to send to the dock for it. I'll—(*Suddenly he catches her hand.*) Oh Mary, *do* you?

MARY (*lowly*)

—What, Jim?

JIM

—Love me, Mary—? (*She turns away with a cry, half sob, of pain.*) Why what's the matter, dear?

MARY

I don't know—

JIM

Nothing's—really troubling you?

MARY

Jim, you've got to listen to me. I—

JIM

Stop it! (*Then.*) Look here, darling—I don't ever want to hear any bad news about us, do you understand? (*She nods, dumbly.*)—There's nothing ever can affect *us*, you know—nothing in this world.—Is there?

MARY (*after a long moment*)

No. I expect there's not.

JIM

Then—there'll never be anything but good news, will there? (*She looks at him and shakes her head.*) That's right! (*He lifts her face to his.*)—Mary from Jim. Much love.

[*He kisses her. She murmurs:*

MARY

—Much love.

JIM

Now about this party—

MARY

I haven't done a thing about it.

JIM

There's lots of time.

MARY

It couldn't be very elaborate.

[*Now they are chattering happily.*

JIM

It needn't be. Let's keep it small. That's more fun. Where's your wedding-dress?

MARY

In the top tray of my old trunk. Why?

JIM

Oh do wear it!

MARY

It's miles too long now.

JIM

You could take a hitch in it.

MARY (*doubtfully*)

I—

JIM

What are pins for?

MARY

Well—

JIM

—And all the men in cutaways.

MARY

They'll be in camphor in the country.

JIM

We'll give a camphor ball.

[MARY *laughs.*

MARY

I'll feel a thousand.

JIM

You'll look six.—I wish we could bring the babies in for it.

MARY

—They might come out of a pie and turn handsprings.

JIM

Are they really blooming?

MARY

Wait till you see them!

JIM

Mary—

MARY

What?

JIM

Where's the motor?

MARY

In the garage, why? (JIM *goes to the telephone.*) —What are you doing?!

JIM (*to the telephone*)

Rhinelander 0890.—That's right.

MARY

Jim!

JIM

Yes.

MARY

You're a madman. It's two o'clock.

JIM

What's the difference? (*To the telephone.*) Hello—

MARY

It'd be four by the time we got there.

JIM

Four's early.

MARY

It certainly is.

JIM (*to the telephone*)

Hello, is this the garage? Is that you Sam? Hello, Sam, this is Mr. Hutton—

MARY

Wait a minute! Wait a *minute!*

JIM (*to the telephone*)

—Just to-night. Half an hour ago. You bet I'm glad. Look here, Sam, it's hot in this attic and we think we need some air—

MARY

Will you *listen* to me!

JIM

Shhh! How can I talk with all this jabber-jabber? (*To the telephone.*)—That's right. Send the roadster right over, will you? Thanks, Sam. See you soon. Make it quick. That's the boy! Good-bye!

[*He replaces the telephone and smiles at* MARY.

MARY

Jim—really—I'm a woman of thirty.

JIM

—Not quite. Come on—

MARY

But they don't wake up until six.

JIM

While we wait we'll pick flowers and match pennies.

[MARY *laughs. Then:*

MARY

I'm not dressed.

JIM

Where's your wrap?

MARY

It's downstairs.

JIM

I love to see them when they're asleep.

MARY

Honestly, Jim, this is ridiculous.

JIM

Tie something round your head and come on. Here—

MARY

Jim, I tell you, I—!

JIM (*severely*)

You will do as I say.

MARY

It *would* be fun, you know.

JIM

Fun—? My dear girl, it's our duty! (*He ties a chiffon scarf around her head.*) There! All you need is the dress now. Come on, sweet.

MARY

Oh, the lights—

JIM

Never mind the lights.

MARY

All right, I won't.

JIM

You haven't forgotten anything, have you?

MARY

Not a thing. Just my dignity.

JIM

That's not serious.

MARY

Who said it was?—Give me your hand.

JIM

You give me yours. (*Their hands fumble for each other. They laugh and move toward the hall.*) Here we go, then—

MARY

Oh, here we go!

[*They go out. Their laughter is heard from the hall.*

Curtain.

MUSICAL SCORE

FOR

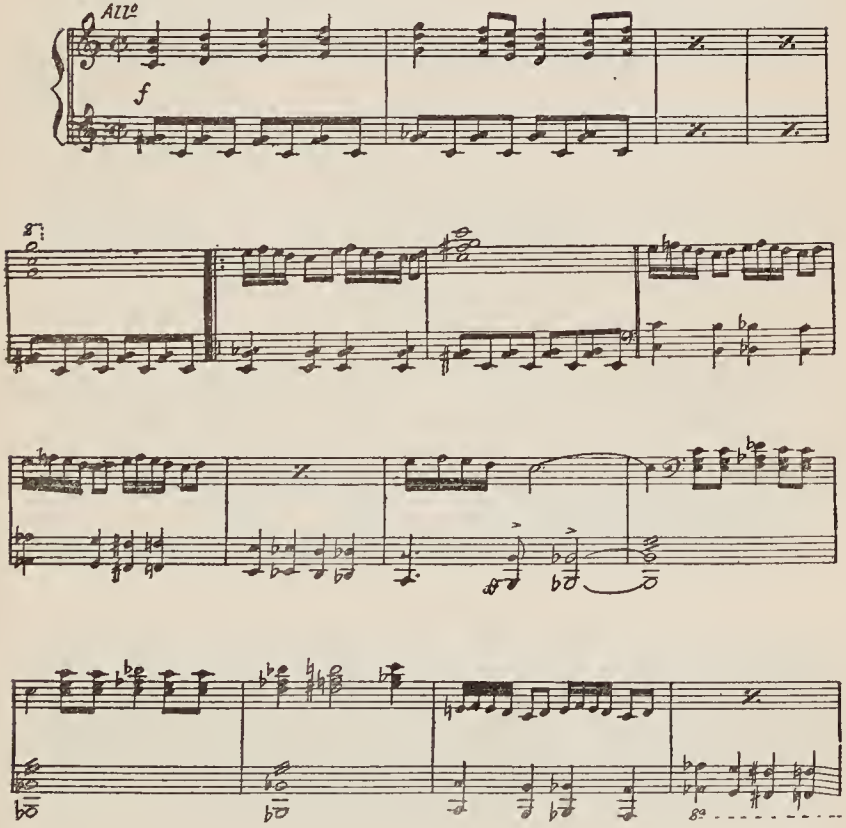
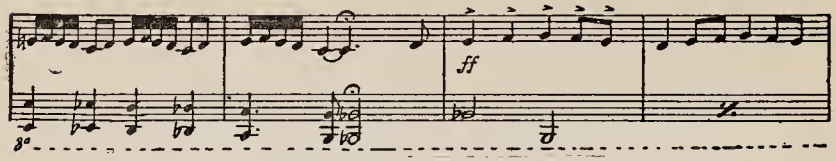
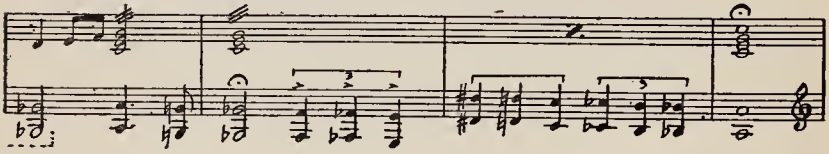
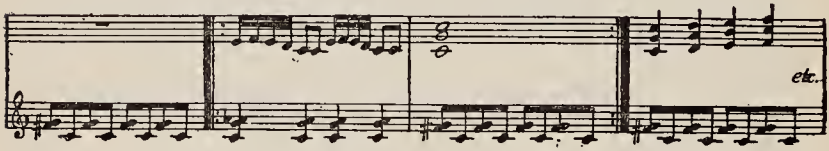
PARIS BOUND

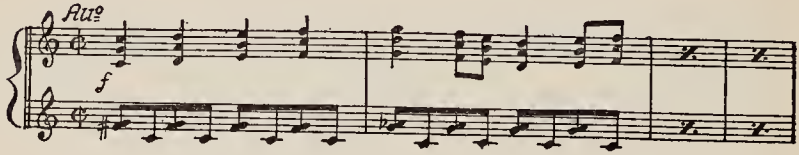
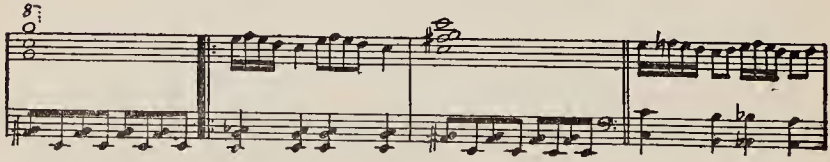
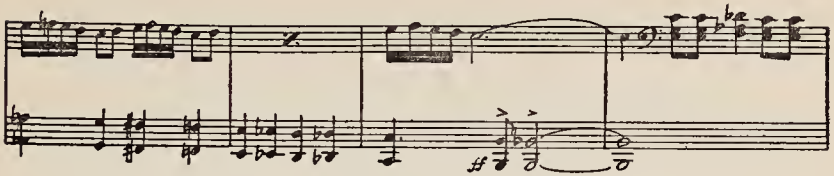
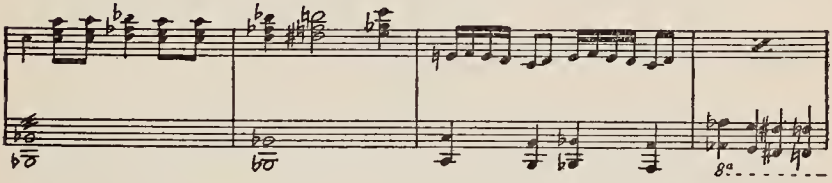
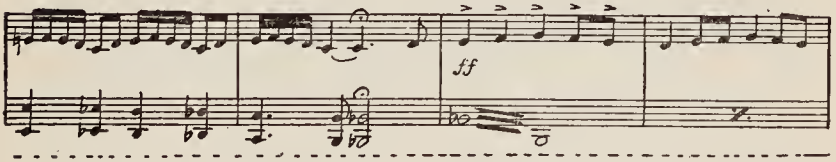
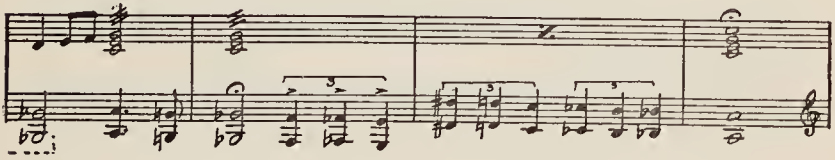
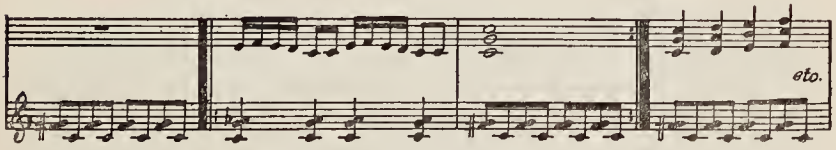
ACT. II

№ 2

Improvisation for
the Ballet "THE FRIENDLY GERM"

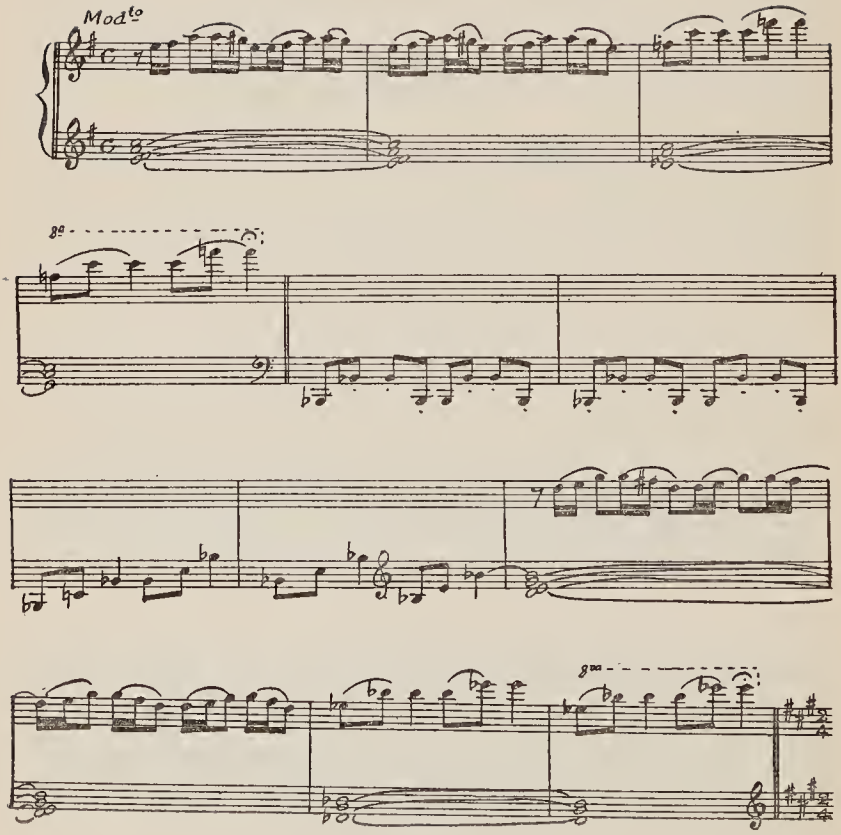
by
FRANK HARLING



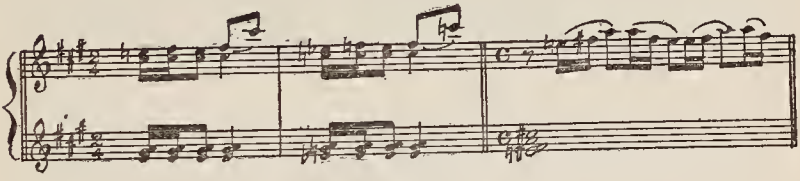
No. 2

– END OF ACT II –

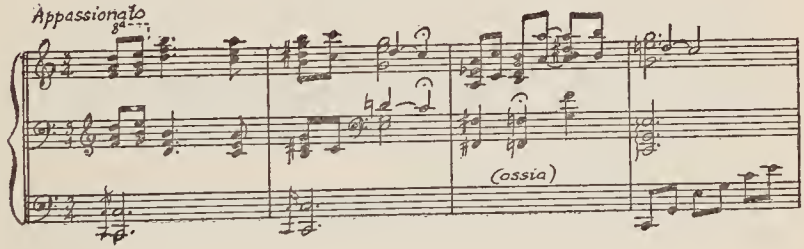
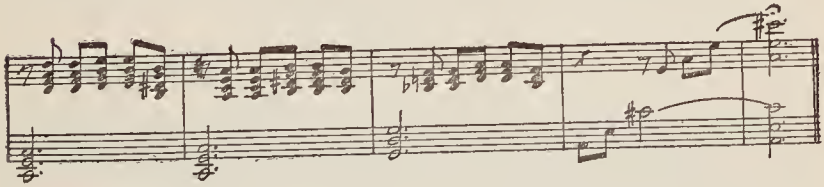
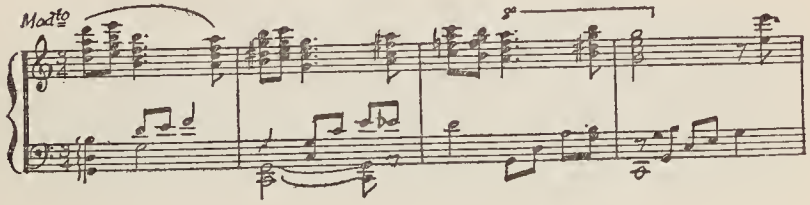
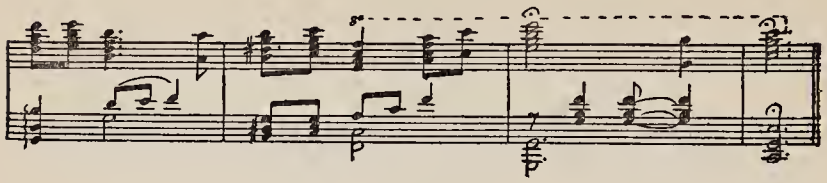
ACT III

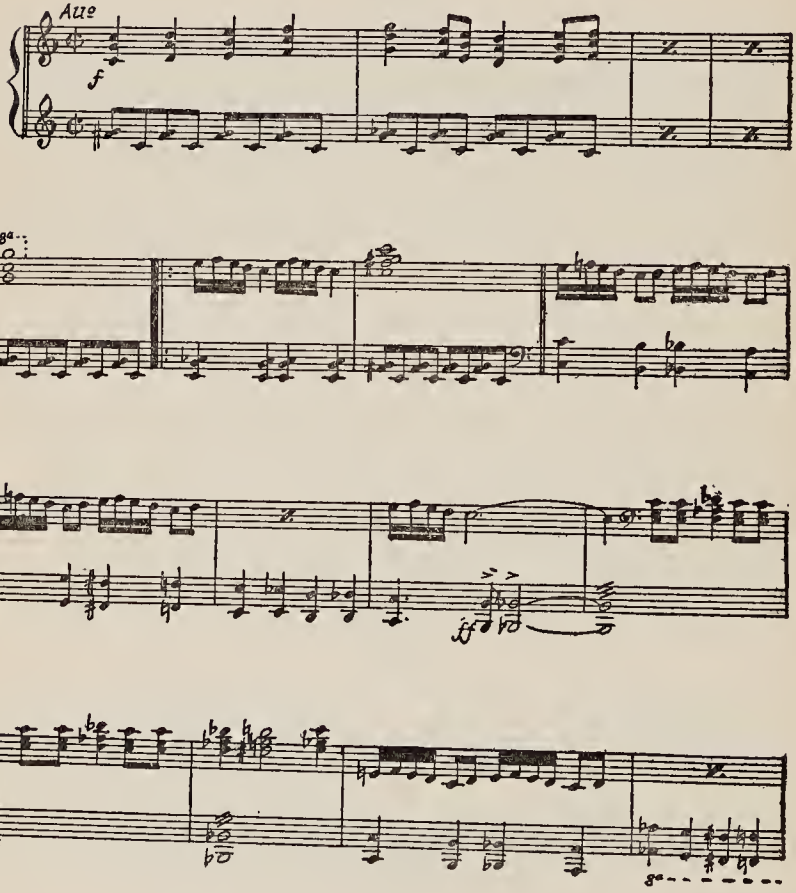
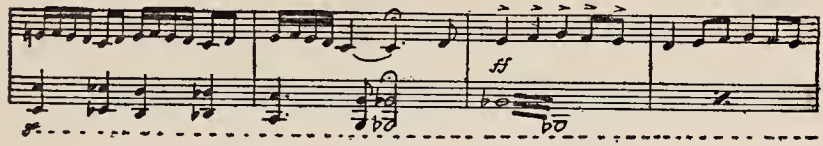
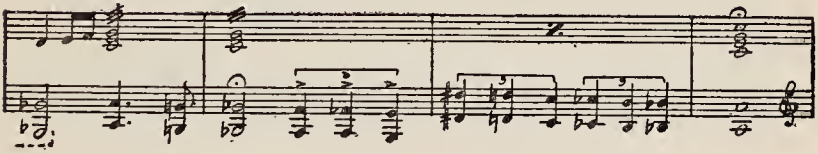
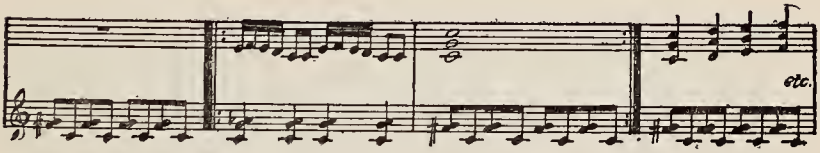
№ 1A

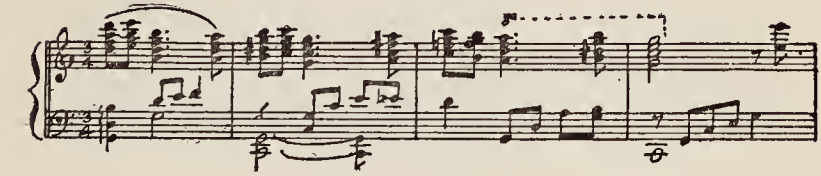
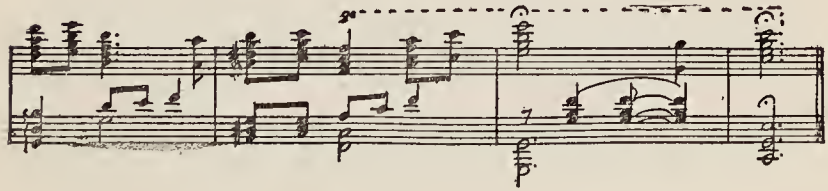


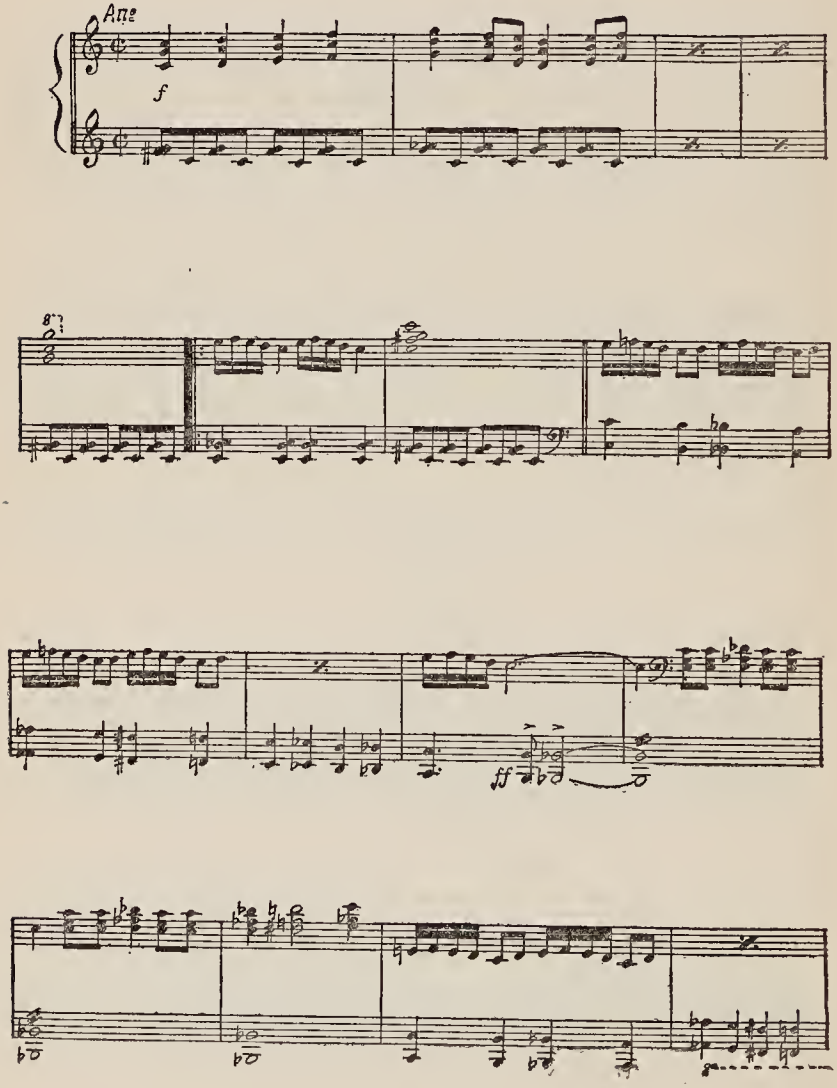
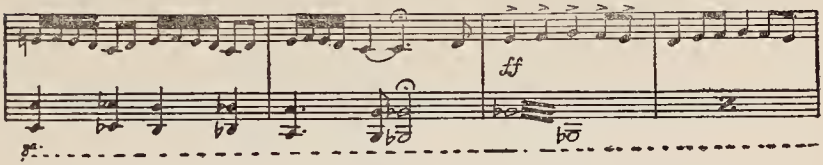
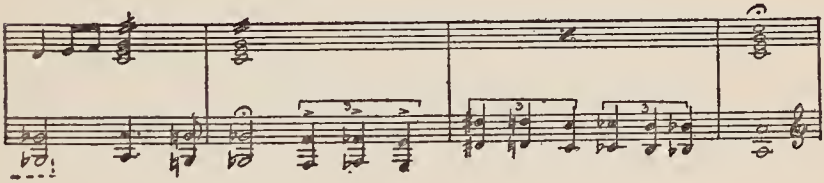
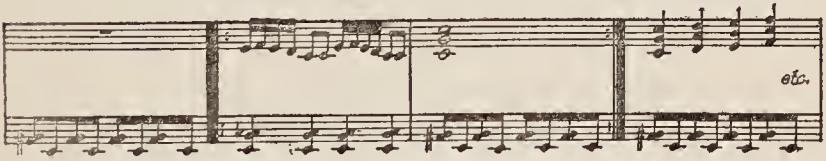
№ 2A

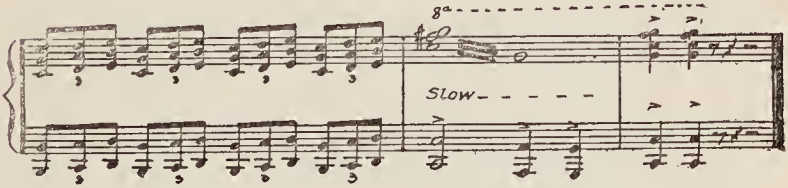


№ 3A

№ 1

No. 2



№ 1

No. 2



№ 3

FINALE

Date Due

TRENT UNIVERSITY
0 1164 0047547 5

PS3503 .A648P3 1929
Barry, Philip
Paris bound, a comedy

DATE | ISSUED TO
218217

218217